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PEG WOFFINGTON,

CHRISTIE JOHNSTONE,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

CHARLES READE.

HOUSEHOLD EDITION.

BOSTON:
FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.,
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CONTENTS.

	Page
Peg Woffington	5
Christie Johnstone	97
Clouds and Sunshine	185
Art: a Dramatic Tale	231
Propria quæ Maribus	267
The Box Tunnel	295
Jack of all Trades	303

PEG WOFFINGTON.

A NOVEL.

TO

T. TAYLOR, ESQ.,

MY FRIEND, AND COADJUTOR IN THE COMEDY OF

"MASKS AND FACES,"

TO WHOM THE READER OWES MUCH OF THE BEST MATTER IN THIS TALE:

AND

TO THE MEMORY OF MARGARET WOFFINGTON,

FALSELY *summed up* UNTIL TO-DAY,

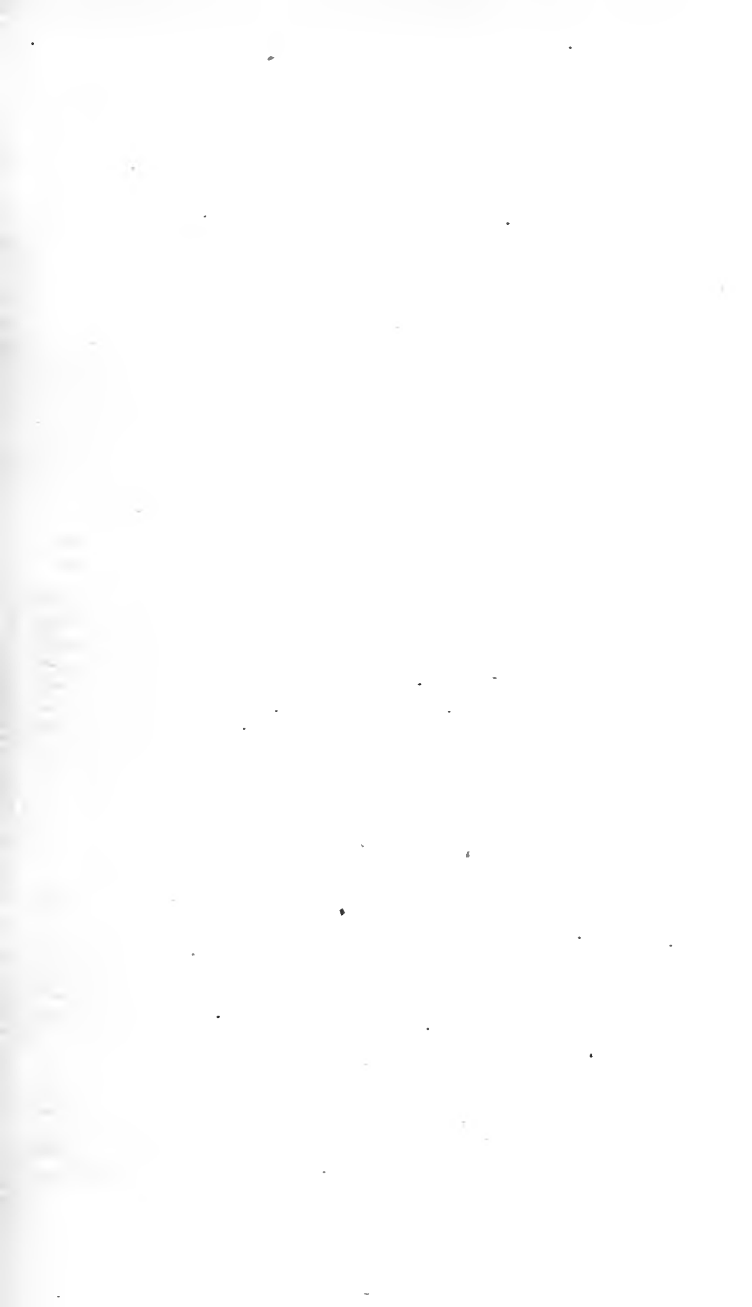
THIS

"Dramatic Story"

IS INSCRIBED BY

CHARLES READE.

LONDON, December 15, 1852.



PEG WOFFINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT the middle of the last century, at eight o'clock in the evening, in a large but poor apartment, a man was slumbering on a rough couch. His rusty and worn suit of black was of a piece with his uncarpeted room, the deal table of home manufacture, and its slim unsnuffed candle.

The man was Triplet, scene painter, actor, and writer of sanguinary plays, in which what ought to be, viz. truth, plot, situation, and dialogue, were not; and what ought not to be, were: *scilicet;* small talk, big talk, fops, ruffians, and ghosts.

His three mediocrities fell so short of one talent, that he was sometimes *impransus.*

He slumbered, but uneasily; the dramatic author was uppermost, and his "Demon of the Hayloft" hung upon the thread of popular favor.

On his uneasy slumber entered from the theatre Mrs. Triplet.

She was a lady who in one respect fell behind her husband; she lacked his variety in ill-doing, but she recovered herself by doing her one thing a shade worse than he did any of his three. She was what is called in grim sport an actress; she had just cast her mite of discredit on royalty by playing the Queen, and had trundled home the moment the breath was out of her royal body. She came in rotatory with fatigue, and fell, gristle, into a chair; she wrenched from her brow a diadem and eyed it with contempt, took from her pocket a sausage, and contemplated it with respect and affection, placed it in a frying-pan on the fire, and entered her bedroom, meaning to don a loose wrapper, and dethrone herself into comfort.

But the poor woman was shot walking by Morpheus, and subsided altogether; for dramatic performances, amusing and exciting to youth seated in the pit, convey a certain weariness to those bright beings who sparkle on the stage for bread and cheese.

Royalty, disposed of, still left its trail of events. The sausage began to "spit." The sound was hardly out of its body, when poor Triplet writhed like a worm on a hook. "Spitter, spittest," went the sausage. Triplet groaned, and at last his inarticulate murmurs became words: "That 's right, pit, now that is so reasonable to condemn a poor fellow's play before you have heard it out." Then, with a change of tone, "Tom," muttered he, "they are losing their respect for spectres; if they do, hunger will make a ghost of me." Next, he fancied the clown or somebody had got into his ghost's costume.

"Dear," said the poor dreamer, "the clown makes a very pretty spectre, with his ghastly white face, and his blood-boltered cheeks and nose. I never saw the fun of a clown before, no! no! no! it is not the clown, it is worse, much worse; O dear, ugh!" and Triplet rolled off the couch like Richard the Third. He sat a moment on the floor, with a finger in each eye; and then, finding he was neither daubing, ranting, nor deluging earth with

"acts," he accused himself of indolence, and sat down to write a small tale of blood and bombast; he took his seat at the deal table with some alacrity, for he had recently made a discovery.

How to write well, *rien que cela*.

"First, think in as homely a way as you can; next, shove your pen under the thought, and lift it by polysyllables to the true level of fiction"; (when done, find a publisher — if you can). "This," said Triplet, "insures common sense to your ideas, which does pretty well for a basis," said Triplet, apologetically, "and elegance to the dress they wear." Triplet, then casting his eyes round in search of such actual circumstances as could be incorporated on this plan with fiction, began to work thus: —

TRIPLET'S FACTS.	TRIPLET'S FICTION.
A farthing dip is on the table.	A solitary candle cast its pale gleams around.
It wants snuffing.	Its elongated wick betrayed an owner steeped in oblivion.
He jumped up, and snuffed it with his fingers. Burned his fingers, and swore a little.	He rose languidly, and trimmed it with an instrument that he had by his side for that purpose, and muttered a silent ejaculation.

Before, however, the mole Triplet could undermine literature and level it with the dust, various interruptions and divisions broke in upon his design, and *sic nos servavit* Apollo. As he wrote the last sentence, a loud rap came to his door. A servant in livery brought him a note from Mr. Vane, dated Covent Garden. Triplet's eyes sparkled, he bustled, wormed himself into a less rusty coat, and started off to the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

In those days, the artists of the pen and the brush ferreted patrons, instead of aiming to be indispensable to the public, the only patron worth a single gesture of the quill.

Mr. Vane had conversed with Triplet, that is, let Triplet talk to him in a coffee-house, and Triplet, the most sanguine of unfortunate men, had already built a series of expectations upon that interview, when this note arrived. Leaving him on his road from Lambeth to Covent Garden, we must introduce more important personages.

Mr. Vane was a wealthy gentleman from Shropshire, whom business had called to London four months ago, and now pleasure detained. Business still occupied the letters he sent now and then to his native county; but it had ceased to occupy the writer. He was a man of learning and taste, as times went; and his love of the Arts had taken him some time before our tale to the theatres, then the resort of all who pretended to taste; and it was thus he had become fascinated by Mrs. Woffington, a lady of great beauty, and a comedian high in favor with the town.

The first night he saw her was an epoch in the history of this gentleman's mind. He had learning and refinement, and he had not great practical experience, and such men are most open to impression from the stage. He saw a being, all grace and bright nature, move like a goddess among the stiff puppets of the scene; her glee and her pathos were equally catching, she held a golden key at which all the doors of the heart flew open. Her face, too, was as full of goodness as intelligence, — it was like no other face; the heart bounded to meet it.

He rented a box at her theatre. He was there every night before the curtain drew up; and, I am sorry to say, he at last took half a dislike to

Sunday, — Sunday "which knits up the ravelled sleave of care," Sunday "tired nature's sweet restorer," because on Sunday there was no Peg Woffington. At first he regarded her as a being of another sphere, an incarnation of poetry and art; but by degrees his secret aspirations became bolder. She was a woman; there were men who knew her; some of them inferior to him in position, and, he flattered himself, in mind. He had even heard a tale against her character. To him her face was its confutation, and he knew how loose-tongued is calumny; but still — !

At last, one day he sent her a letter, unsigned. This letter expressed his admiration of her talent in warm but respectful terms; the writer told her it had become necessary to his heart to return her in some way his thanks for the land of enchantment to which she had introduced him. Soon after this, choice flowers found their way to her dressing-room every night, and now and then verses and precious stones mingled with her roses and eglantine. And O, how he watched the great actress's eye all the night; how he tried to discover whether she looked oftener towards his box than the corresponding box on the other side of the house.

Did she notice him, or did she not? What a point gained, if she was conscious of his nightly attendance: she would feel he was a friend, not a mere auditor. He was jealous of the pit, on whom Mrs. Woffington lavished her smiles without measure.

At last, one day he sent her a wreath of flowers, and implored her, if any word he had said to her had pleased or interested her, to wear this wreath that night. After he had done this he trembled; he had courted a decision, when, perhaps, his safety lay in patience and time. She made her *entrée;* he turned cold as she glided into sight from the prompter's side; he raised his eyes slowly and fearfully from her feet to her head; her head was bare, wreathed only by its own rich glossy honors. "Fool!" thought he, "to think she would hang frivolities upon that glorious head for me." Yet his disappointment told him he had really hoped it; he would not have sat out the play but for a leaden incapacity of motion that seized him.

The curtain drew up for the fifth act, and — could he believe his eyes? — Mrs. Woffington stood upon the stage with his wreath upon her graceful head. She took away his breath. She spoke the epilogue, and, as the curtain fell, she lifted her eyes, he thought, to his box, and made him a distinct, queen-like courtesy; his heart fluttered to his mouth, and he walked home on wings and tiptoe. In short —

Mrs. Woffington, as an actress, justified a portion of this enthusiasm; she was one of the truest artists of her day; a fine lady in her hands was a lady, with the genteel affectation of a gentlewoman, not a harlot's affectation, which is simply and without exaggeration what the stage commonly gives us for a fine lady; an old woman in her hands was a thorough woman, thoroughly old, not a cackling young person of epicene gender. She played Sir Harry Wildair like a man, which is how he ought to be played (or, which is better still, not at all), so that Garrick acknowledged her as a male rival, and abandoned the part he no longer monopolized.

Now it very, very rarely happens that a woman of her age is high enough in art and knowledge to do these things. In players, vanity cripples art at every step. The young actress who is not a Woffington aims to display herself by means of her part, which is vanity; not to raise her part by sinking herself in it, which is art. It has been my misfortune to see ——, and ——, and——, and——, et ceteras, play the man; Nature, forgive them, if you can, for art never will; they never reached any idea more manly than a steady resolve to exhibit the points of a woman with

greater ferocity than they could in a gown. But consider, ladies, a man is not the meanest of the brute creation, so how can he be an unwomanly female? This sort of actress aims not to give her author's creation to the public, but to trot out the person instead of the creation, and shows sots what a calf it has — and is.

Vanity, vanity! all is vanity! Mesdames les Charlatanes.

Margaret Woffington was of another mould; she played the ladies of high comedy with grace, distinction, and delicacy. But in Sir Harry Wildair she parted with a woman's mincing foot and tongue, and played the man in a style large, spirited, and *élancé*. As Mrs. Day (committee) she painted wrinkles on her lovely face so honestly that she was taken for threescore, and she carried out the design with voice and person, and did a vulgar old woman to the life. She disfigured her own beauties to show the beauty of her art; in a word, she was an artist! It does not follow she was the greatest artist that ever breathed; far from it. Mr. Vane was carried to this notion by passion and ignorance.

On the evening of our tale he was at his post patiently sitting out one of those sanguinary discourses our rude forefathers thought were tragic plays. *Sedet æternumque Sedebit Infelix Theseus*, because Mrs. Woffington is to speak the epilogue.

These epilogues were curiosities of the human mind; they whom, just to ourselves and *them*, we call our *forbears*, had an idea their blood and bombast were not ridiculous enough in themselves, so when the curtain had fallen on the *débris* of the *dramatis personæ*, and of common sense, they sent on an actress to turn all the sentiment so laboriously acquired into a jest.

To insist that nothing good or beautiful shall be carried safe from a play out into the street was the bigotry of English horse-play. Was a Lucretia the heroine of the tragedy, she was careful in the epilogue to speak like Messalina. Did a king's mistress come to hunger and repentance, she disinfected all the *petites maîtresses* in the house of the moral, by assuring them that sin is a joke, repentance a greater, and that she individually was ready for either if they would but cry, laugh, and pay. Then the audience used to laugh, and if they did not, lo! the manager, actor, and author of heroic tragedy were exceeding sorrowful.

Whilst sitting attendance on the epilogue, Mr. Vane had nothing to distract him from the congregation but a sanguinary sermon in five heads, so his eyes roved over the pews, and presently he became aware of a familiar face watching him closely. The gentleman to whom it belonged finding himself recognized left his seat, and a minute later Sir Charles Pomander entered Mr. Vane's box.

This Sir Charles Pomander was a gentleman of vice: pleasure he called it. Mr. Vane had made his acquaintance two years ago in Shropshire. Sir Charles, who husbanded everything except his soul, had turned himself out to grass for a month. His object was, by roast mutton, bread with some little flour in it, air, water, temperance, chastity, and peace, to be enabled to take a deeper plunge into impurities of food and morals.

A few nights ago, unseen by Mr. Vane, he had observed him in the theatre; an ordinary man would have gone at once and shaken hands with him, but this was not an ordinary man, this was a diplomatist. First of all, he said to himself: "What is this man doing here?" Then he soon discovered this man must be in love with some actress; then it became his business to know who she was; this too soon betrayed itself. Then it became more than ever Sir Charles's business to know whether Mrs. Woffington returned the sentiment; and here his penetration was at fault, for the moment; he determined, however, to discover.

Mr. Vane then received his friend, all unsuspicious how that friend had been skinning him with his eyes for some time past. After the usual compliments had passed between two gentlemen who had been hand and glove for a month and forgotten each other's existence for two years, Sir Charles, still keeping in view his design, said: —

"Let us go upon the stage." The fourth act had just concluded.

"Go upon the stage!" said Mr. Vane; "what, where she — I mean among the actors?"

"Yes: come into the green-room. There are one or two people of reputation there; I will introduce you to them, if you please."

"Go upon the stage!" why, if it had been proposed to him to go to heaven he would not have been more astonished. He was too astonished at first to realize the full beauty of the arrangement, by means of which he might be within a yard of Mrs. Woffington, might feel her dress rustle past him, might speak to her, might drink her voice fresh from her lips almost before it mingled with meaner air. Silence gives consent, and Mr. Vane, though he thought a great deal, said nothing; so Pomander rose, and they left the boxes together. He led the way to the stage door, which was opened obsequiously to him; they then passed through a dismal passage, and suddenly emerged upon that scene of enchantment, the stage, — a dirty platform encumbered on all sides with piles of scenery in flats. They threaded their way through rusty velvet actors and fustian carpenters, and entered the green-room. At the door of this magic chamber Vane trembled and half wished he could retire. They entered; his apprehension gave way to disappointment, she was not there. Collecting himself, he was presently introduced to a smart, jaunty, and, to do him justice, *distingué* old beau. This was Colley Cibber, Esq., poet laureate, and retired actor and dramatist, a gentleman who is entitled to a word or two.

This Cibber was the only actor since Shakespeare's time who had both acted and written well. Pope's personal resentment misleads the reader of English poetry as to Cibber's real place among the wits of the day.

The man's talent was dramatic, not didactic, or epic, or pastoral. Pope was not so deep in the drama as in other matters, and Cibber was one of its luminaries; he wrote some of the best comedies of his day. He also succeeded where Dryden, for lack of true dramatic taste, failed. He tampered successfully with Shakespeare. Colley Cibber's version of "Richard the Third" is impudent and slightly larcenic, but it is marvellously effective. It has stood a century, and probably will stand forever; and the most admired passages in what literary humbugs who pretend they know Shakespeare by the closet, not the stage, accept as Shakespeare's "Richard," are Cibber's.

Mr. Cibber was now in private life, a mild edition of his own Lord Foppington; he had none of the snob-fop as represented on our conventional stage; nobody ever had, and lived. He was in tolerably good taste; but he went ever gold-laced, highly powdered, scented, and diamonded, dispensing graceful bows, praises of whoever had the good luck to be dead, and satire of all who were here to enjoy it.

Mr. Vane, to whom the drama had now become the golden branch of letters, looked with some awe on this veteran, for he had seen many Woffingtons. He fell soon upon the subject nearest his heart. He asked Mr. Cibber what he thought of Mrs. Woffington. The old gentleman thought well of the young lady's talent, especially her comedy; in tragedy, said he, she imitates Mademoiselle Dumesnil, of the Théâtre Français, and confounds the stage rhetorician with the actress. The next question was not

so fortunate. "Did you ever see so great and true an actress upon the whole?"

Mr. Cibber opened his eyes, a slight flush came into his wash-leather face, and he replied: "I have not only seen many equal, many superior to her, but I have seen some half-dozen who would have eaten her up and spit her out again, and not known they had done anything out of the way."

Here Pomander soothed the veteran's dudgeon by explaining in dulcet tones that his friend was not long from Shropshire, and — The critic interrupted him, and bade him not dilute the excuse.

Now Mr. Vane had as much to say as either of them, but he had not the habit, which dramatic folks have, of carrying his whole bank in his cheek-pocket, so they quenched him for two minutes. But lovers are not silenced, he soon returned to the attack; he dwelt on the grace, the ease, the freshness, the intelligence, the universal beauty of Mrs. Woffington. Pomander sneered, to draw him out. Cibber smiled, with good-natured superiority. This nettled the young gentleman, he fired up, his handsome countenance glowed, he turned Demosthenes for her he loved. One advantage he had over both Cibber and Pomander, a fair stock of classical learning; on this he now drew.

"Other actors and actresses," said he, "are monotonous in voice, monotonous in action, but Mrs. Woffington's delivery has the compass and variety of nature, and her movements are free from the stale uniformity that distinguishes artifice from art. The others seem to me to have but two dreams of grace, a sort of crawling on stilts is their motion, and an angular stiffness their repose." He then cited the most famous statues of antiquity, and quoted situations in plays where, by her fine dramatic instinct, Mrs. Woffington, he said, threw her person into postures similar to these, and of equal beauty; not that she strikes attitudes like the rest, but she melts from one beautiful statue into another; and, if sculptors could gather from her immortal graces, painters too might take from her face the beauties that belong of right to passion and thought, and orators might revive their withered art, and learn from those golden lips the music of old Athens, that quelled tempestuous mobs, and princes drunk with victory.

Much as this was, he was going to say more, ever so much more, but he became conscious of a singular sort of grin upon every face; this grin made him turn rapidly round to look for its cause. It explained itself at once; at his very elbow was a lady, whom his heart recognized, though her back was turned to him. She was dressed in a rich silk gown, pearl white, with flowers and sprigs embroidered; her beautiful white neck and arms were bare. She was sweeping up the room with the epilogue in her hand, learning it off by heart; at the other end of the room she turned, and now she shone full upon him.

It certainly was a dazzling creature: she had a head of beautiful form, perched like a bird upon a throat massive yet shapely and smooth as a column of alabaster, a symmetrical brow, black eyes full of fire and tenderness, a delicious mouth, with a hundred varying expressions, and that marvellous faculty of giving beauty alike to love or scorn, a sneer or a smile. But she had one feature more remarkable than all, her eyebrows, — the actor's feature; they were jet black, strongly marked, and in repose were arched like a rainbow; but it was their extraordinary flexibility which made other faces upon the stage look sleepy beside Margaret Woffington's. In person she was considerably above the middle height, and so finely formed that one could not determine the exact character of her figure. At one time it seemed all stateliness, at another time elegance personified, and flowing voluptuousness at another. She was Juno, Psyche, Hebe,

by turns, and for aught we know at will.

It must be confessed that a sort of halo of personal grandeur surrounds a great actress. A scene is set; half a dozen nobodies are there lost in it, because they are and seem lumps of nothing. The great artist steps upon that scene, and how she fills it in a moment! Mind and majesty wait upon her in the air; her person is lost in the greatness of her personal presence; she dilates with *thought*, and a stupid giantess looks a dwarf beside her.

No wonder then that Mr. Vane felt overpowered by this torch in a closet. To vary the metaphor, it seemed to him, as she swept up and down, as if the green-room was a shell, and this glorious creature must burst it and be free. Meantime, the others saw a pretty actress studying her business; and Cibber saw a dramatic school-girl learning what he presumed to be a very silly set of words. Sir C. Pomander's eye had been on her the moment she entered, and he watched keenly the effect of Vane's eloquent eulogy; but apparently the actress was too deep in her epilogue for anything else. She came in, saying, "Mum, mum, mum," over her task, and she went on doing so. The experienced Mr. Cibber, who had divined Vane in an instant, drew him into a corner, and complimented him on his well-timed eulogy.

"You acted that mighty well, sir," said he. "Stop my vitals! if I did not think you were in earnest, till I saw the jade had slipped in among us. It told, sir, — it told."

Up fired Vane. "What do you mean, sir?" said he. "Do you suppose my admiration of that lady is feigned?"

"No need to speak so loud, sir," replied the old gentleman; "she hears you. These hussies have ears like hawks."

He then dispensed a private wink and a public bow; with which he strolled away from Mr. Vane, and walked feebly and jauntily up the room, whistling "Fair Hebe"; fixing his eye upon the past, and somewhat ostentatiously overlooking the existence of the present company.

There is no great harm in an old gentleman whistling, but there are two ways of doing it; and as this old beau did it, it seemed not unlike a small cock-a-doodle-doo of general defiance; and the denizens of the green-room, swelled now to a considerable number by the addition of all the ladies and gentlemen who had been killed in the fourth act, or whom the buttery-fingered author could not keep in hand until the fall of the curtain, felt it as such; and so they were not sorry when Mrs. Woffington, looking up from her epilogue, cast a glance upon the old beau, waited for him, and walked parallel with him on the other side the room, giving an absurdly exact imitation of his carriage and deportment. To make this more striking, she pulled out of her pocket, after a mock search, a huge paste ring, gazed on it with a ludicrous affectation of simple wonder, stuck it, like Cibber's diamond, on her little finger, and, pursing up her mouth, proceeded to whistle a quick movement,

"Which, by some devilish cantrip sleight,"

played round the old beau's slow movement, without being at variance with it. As for the character of this ladylike performance, it was clear, brilliant, and loud as blacksmith.

The folk laughed; Vane was shocked. "She profanes herself by whistling," thought he. Mr. Cibber was confounded. He appeared to have no idea whence came this sparkling adagio. He looked round, placed his hands to his ears, and left off whistling. So did his musical accomplice.

"Gentlemen," said Cibber, with pathetic gravity, "the wind howls most dismally this evening! I took it for a drunken shoemaker!"

At this there was a roar of laughter, except from Mr. Vane. Peg Woffington laughed as merrily as the others, and showed a set of teeth that were really dazzling; but all in one moment, without the preliminaries an ordinary countenance requires, this laughing Venus pulled a face gloomy beyond conception. Down came her black brows straight as a line, and she cast a look of bitter reproach on all present; resuming her study, as who should say, "Are ye not ashamed to divert a poor girl from her epilogue?" And then she went on, "Mum! mum! mum!" casting off ever and anon resentful glances; and this made the fools laugh again.

The Laureate was now respectfully addressed by one of his admirers, James Quin, the Falstaff of the day, and the rival at this time of Garrick in tragic characters, though the general opinion was, that he could not long maintain a standing against the younger genius and his rising school of art.

Off the stage, James Quin was a character; his eccentricities were three, — a humorist, a glutton, and an honest man; traits that often caused astonishment and ridicule, especially the last.

"May we not hope for something from Mr. Cibber's pen after so long a silence?"

"No," was the considerate reply. "Who have ye got to play it?"

"Plenty," said Quin; "there 's your humble servant, there 's — "

"Humility at the head of the list," cried she of the epilogue. "Mum! mum! mum!"

Vane thought this so sharp.

"Garrick, Barry, Macklin, Kitty Clive here at my side, Mrs. Cibber, the best tragic actress I ever saw; and Woffington, who is as good a comedian as you ever saw, sir"; and Quin turned as red as fire.

"Keep your temper, Jemmy," said Mrs. Woffington, with a severe accent. "Mum! mum! mum!"

"You misunderstand my question," replied Cibber, calmly; "I know your *dramatis personæ*, but where the devil are your actors?"

Here was a blow.

"The public," said Quin, in some agitation, "would snore, if we acted as they did in your time."

"How do you know that, sir?" was the supercilious rejoinder; "*you never tried!*"

Mr. Quin was silenced. Peg Woffington looked off her epilogue.

"Bad as we are," said she, coolly, "we might be worse."

Mr. Cibber turned round, slightly raised his eyebrows.

"Indeed!" said he. "Madam!" added he, with a courteous smile; "will you be kind enough to explain to me how you could be worse!"

"If, like a crab, we could go backwards!"

At this the auditors tittered; and Mr. Cibber had recourse to his spy-glass.

This gentleman was satirical or insolent, as the case might demand, in three degrees, of which the snuff-box was the comparative, and the spy-glass the superlative. He had learned this on the stage; in annihilating Quin he had just used the snuff weapon, and now he drew his spy-glass upon poor Peggy.

"Whom have we here?" said he: then he looked with his spy-glass to see; "oh! the little Irish orange-girl!"

"Whose basket outweighed Colley Cibber's salary for the first twenty years of his dramatic career," was the delicate reply to the above delicate remark. It staggered him for a moment; however, he affected a most puzzled air, then gradually allowed a light to steal into his features.

"Eh! ah! oh! how stupid I am; I understand; you sold something besides oranges!"

"Oh!" said Mr. Vane, and colored up to the temples, and cast a look on Cibber, as much as to say, "If you were not seventy-three!"

His ejaculation was something so

different from any tone any other person there present could have uttered, that the actress's eye dwelt on him for a single moment, and in that moment he felt himself looked through and through.

"I sold the young fops a bargain, you mean," was her calm reply; "and now I am come down to the old ones. A truce, Mr. Cibber, what do you understand by an actor? Tell me; for I am foolish enough to respect your opinion on these matters!"

"An actor, young lady," said he, gravely, "is an artist who has gone deep enough in his art to make dunces, critics, and greenhorns take it for nature; moreover, he really personates; which your mere *man of the stage* never does. He has learned the true art of self-multiplication. He drops Betterton, Booth, Wilkes, or, ahem —"

"Cibber," inserted Sir Charles Pomander. Cibber bowed.

"In his dressing-room, and comes out young or old, a fop, a valet, a lover, or a hero, with voice, mien, and every gesture to match. A grain less than this may be good speaking, fine preaching, deep grunting, high ranting, eloquent reciting; but I'll be hanged if it is acting!"

"Then Colley Cibber never acted," whispered Quin to Mrs. Clive.

"Then Margaret Woffington is an actress," said M. W.; "the fine ladies take my Lady Betty for their sister. In Mrs. Day, I pass for a woman of seventy; and in Sir Harry Wildair I have been taken for a man. I would have told you that before, but I did n't know it was to my credit," said she, slyly, "till Mr. Cibber laid down the law."

"Proof!" said Cibber.

"A warm letter from one lady, diamond buckles from another, and an offer of her hand and fortune from a third; *rien que cela*."

Mr. Cibber conveyed behind her back a look of absolute incredulity; she divined it.

"I will not show you the letters," continued she, "because Sir Harry, though a rake, was a gentleman; but here are the buckles"; and she fished them out of her pocket, capacious of such things. The buckles were gravely inspected, they made more than one eye water, they were undeniable.

"Well, let us see what we can do for her," said the Laureate. He tapped his box and without a moment's hesitation produced the most execrable distich in the language: —

"Now who is like Peggy, with talent at will,
A maid loved her Harry, *for want of a Bill?*

"Well, child," continued he, after the applause which follows extemporary verses had subsided, "take *me* in. Play something to make me lose sight of saucy Peg Woffington, and I'll give the world five acts more before the curtain falls on Colley Cibber."

"If you could be deceived," put in Mr. Vane, somewhat timidly; "I think there is no disguise through which grace and beauty such as Mrs. Woffington's would not shine, to my eyes."

"That is to praise my person at the expense of my wit, sir, is it not?" was her reply.

This was the first word she had ever addressed to him. The tones appeared so sweet to him, that he could not find anything to reply for listening to them; and Cibber resumed: —

"Meantime, I will show you a real actress; she is coming here to-night to meet me. Did ever you children hear of Ann Bracegirdle?"

"Bracegirdle!" said Mrs. Clive; "why, she has been dead this thirty years; at least I thought so."

"Dead to the stage. There is more heat in her ashes than in your fire, Kate Clive! Ah! here comes her messenger," continued he, as an ancient man appeared with a letter in his hand. This letter Mrs. Woffington snatched and read, and at the same instant in bounced the call-boy. "Epilogue called," said this urchin,

in the tone of command which these small fry of Parnassus adopt; and, obedient to his high behest, Mrs. Woffington moved to the door, with the Bracegirdle missive in her hand, but not before she had delivered its general contents: "The great actress will be here in a few minutes," said she, and she glided swiftly out of the room.

CHAPTER II.

People whose mind or manners possess any feature, and are not as devoid of all eccentricity as half-pounds of butter bought of metropolitan grocers, are recommended not to leave a roomful of their acquaintances until the last but one. Yes, they should always be penultimate. Perhaps Mrs. Woffington knew this; but epilogues are stubborn things, and call-boys undeniable.

"Did you ever hear a woman whistle before?"

"Never; but I saw one sit astride on an ass in Germany!"

"The saddle was not on her husband, I hope, madam?"

"No, sir; the husband walked by his kinsfolk's side, and made the best of a bad bargain, as Peggy's husband will have to."

"Wait till some one ventures on the gay Lotharia, — *illi æs triplex;* that means he must have triple brass, Kitty."

"I deny that, sir; since his wife will always have enough for both."

"I have not observed the lady's brass," said Vane, trembling with passion; "but I observed her talent, and I noticed that whoever attacks her to her face comes badly off."

"Well said, sir," answered Quin; "and I wish Kitty here would tell us why she hates Mrs. Woffington, the best-natured woman in the theatre?"

"I don't hate her, I don't trouble my head about her."

"Yes, you hate her; for you never miss a cut at her, never!"

"Do you hate a haunch of venison, Quin?" said the lady.

"No, you little unnatural monster," replied Quin.

"For all that, you never miss a cut at one, so hold your tongue!"

"Le beau raisonnement!" said Mr. Cibber. "James Quin, don't interfere with nature's laws; let our ladies hate one another, it eases their minds; try to make them Christians, and you will not convert their tempers, but spoil your own. Peggy there hates George Anne Bellamy, because she has gaudy silk dresses from Paris, by paying for them, as *she* could, if not too stingy. Kitty here hates Peggy because Rich has breeched her, whereas Kitty, who now sets up for a prude, wanted to put delicacy off and small-clothes on in Peg's stead, that is where the Kate and Peg shoe pinches, near the femoral artery, James.

"Shrimps have the souls of shrimps," resumed this *censor castigatorque minorum.* "Listen to me, and learn that really great actors are great in soul, and do not blubber like a great school-girl because Anne Bellamy has two yellow silk dresses from Paris, as I saw Woffington blubber in this room, and would not be comforted; nor fume like Kitty Clive, because Woffington has a pair of breeches and a little boy's rapier to go a playing at acting with. When I was young, two giantesses fought for empire upon this very stage, where now dwarfs crack and bounce like parched peas. They played Roxana and Statira in the "Rival Queens." Rival queens of art themselves, they put out all their strength. In the middle of the last act the town gave judgment in favor of Statira. What did Roxana? Did she spill grease on Statira's robe, as Peg Woffington would? or stab her, as I believe Kitty here capable of doing? No! Statira was never so tenderly killed as that night: she owned this to me. Roxana bade the theatre farewell that night, and wrote to Statira thus: I give you word for word: "Madam, the best judge we

have has decided in your favor. I shall never play second on a stage where I have been first so long, but I shall often be a spectator, and methinks none will appreciate your talent more than I, who have felt its weight. My wardrobe, one of the best in Europe, is of no use to me; if you will honor me by selecting a few of my dresses, you will gratify me, and I shall fancy I see myself upon the stage to greater advantage than before.' "

"And what did Statira answer, sir?" said Mr. Vane, eagerly.

"She answered thus: 'Madam, the town has often been wrong, and may have been so last night, in supposing that I vied successfully with your merit; but thus much is certain, — and here, madam, I am the best judge, — that off the stage you have just conquered me. I shall wear with pride any dress you have honored, and shall feel inspired to great exertions by your presence among our spectators, unless, indeed, the sense of your magnanimity and the recollection of your talent should damp me by the dread of losing any portion of your good opinion."

"What a couple of stiff old things," said Mrs. Clive.

"Nay, madam, say not so," cried Vane, warmly; "surely, this was the lofty courtesy of two great minds not to be overbalanced by strife, defeat, or victory."

"What were their names, sir?"

"Statira was the great Mrs. Oldfield. Roxana you will see here tonight."

This caused a sensation.

Colley's reminiscences were interrupted by loud applause from the theatre; the present seldom gives the past a long hearing.

The old war-horse cocked his ears.

"It is Woffington speaking the epilogue," said Quin.

"O, she has got the length of their foot, somehow," said a small actress.

"And the breadth of their hands, too," said Pomander, waking from a nap.

"It is the depth of their hearts she has sounded," said Vane.

In those days, if a metaphor started up, the poor thing was coursed up hill and down dale, and torn limb from jacket; even in Parliament, a trope was sometimes hunted from one session into another.

"You were asking me about Mrs. Oldfield, sir," resumed Cibber, rather peevishly. "I will own to you, I lack words to convey a just idea of her double and complete supremacy. But the comedians of this day are weak-strained *farceurs* compared with her, and her tragic tone was thunder set to music.

"I saw a brigadier-general cry like a child at her Indiana; I have seen her crying with pain herself at the wing (for she was always a great sufferer), I have seen her then spring upon the stage as Lady Townley, and in a moment sorrow brightened into joy; the air seemed to fill with singing-birds, that chirped the pleasures of fashion, love, and youth, in notes sparkling like diamonds and stars and prisms. She was above criticism, out of its scope, as is the blue sky; men went not to judge her, they drank her, and gazed at her, and were warmed at her, and refreshed by her. The fops were awed into silence, and with their humbler betters thanked Heaven for her, if they thanked it for anything.

"In all the crowded theatre, care and pain and poverty were banished from the memory, whilst Oldfield's face spoke, and her tongue flashed melodies; the lawyer forgot his quillets; the polemic, the mote in his brother's eye; the old maid, her grudge against the two sexes; the old man, his gray hairs and his lost hours. And can it be, that all this which should have been immortal, is quite — quite lost, is as though it had never been?" he sighed. "Can it be that its fame is now sustained by me; who twang with my poor lute, cracked and old, these feeble praises of a broken lyre: —

'Whose wires were golden, and its heavenly air
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear'?"

He paused, and his eye looked back over many years: then, with a very different tone, he added: —

"And that Jack Falstaff there must have seen her, now I think on 't."

"Only once, sir," said Quin, "and I was but ten years old."

"He saw her once, and he was ten years old; yet he calls Woffington a great comedian, and my son The's wife, with her hatchet face, the greatest tragedian he ever saw! Jemmy, what an ass you must be!"

"Mrs. Cibber always makes me cry, and t'other always makes me laugh," said Quin, stoutly, "that 's why."

Ce beau raisonnement met no answer, but a look of sovereign contempt.

A very trifling incident saved the ladies of the British stage from further criticism. There were two candles in this room, one on each side; the call-boy had entered, and, poking about for something, knocked down and broke one of these.

"Awkward imp!" cried a velvet page.

"I 'll go *to the Treasury* for another, ma'am," said the boy, pertly, and vanished with the fractured wax.

I take advantage of the interruption to open Mr. Vane's mind to the reader. First, he had been astonished at the freedom of sarcasm these people indulged in without quarrelling; next at the non-respect of sex.

"So sex is not recognized in this community," thought he. Then the glibness and merit of some of their answers surprised and amused him. He, like me, had seldom met an imaginative repartee, except in a play or a book. "Society's" repartees were then, as they are now, the good old tree in various dresses and veils: *Tu quoque, tu mentiris, vos damnemini;* but he was sick and dispirited on the whole; such very bright illusions had been dimmed in these few minutes.

She was brilliant; but her manners, if not masculine, were very daring; and yet, when she spoke to him, a stranger, how sweet and gentle her voice was! Then it was clear nothing but his ignorance could have placed her at the summit of her art.

Still he clung to his enthusiasm for her. He drew Pomander aside. "What a simplicity there is in Mrs. Woffington!" said he; "the rest, male and female, are all so affected; she is so fresh and natural. They are all hot-house plants; she is a cowslip with the May dew on it."

"What you take for simplicity is her refined art," replied Sir Charles.

"No!" said Vane, "I never saw a more innocent creature!"

Pomander laughed in his face; this laugh disconcerted him more than words; he spoke no more, — he sat pensive. He was sorry he had come to this place, where everybody knew his goddess; yet nobody admired, nobody loved, and, alas! nobody respected her.

He was roused from his revery by a noise; the noise was caused by Cibber falling on Garrick, whom Pomander had maliciously quoted against all the tragedians of Colley Cibber's day.

"I tell you," cried the veteran, "that this Garrick has banished dignity from the stage, and given us in exchange what you and he take for fire; but it is smoke and vapor. His manner is little, like his person, it is all fuss and bustle. This is his idea of a tragic scene: A little fellow comes bustling in, goes bustling about, and runs bustling out." Here Mr. Cibber left the room, to give greater effect to his description, but presently returned in a mighty pother, saying: "'Give me another horse!' Well, where 's the horse? don't you see I 'm waiting for him? 'Bind up my wounds!' Look sharp now with these wounds. 'Have mercy, Heaven!' but be quick about it, for the pit

can't wait for Heaven. Bustle! bustle! bustle!"

The old dog was so irresistibly funny, that the whole company were obliged to laugh; but in the midst of their merriment Mrs. Woffington's voice was heard at the door.

"This way, madam."

A clear and somewhat shrill voice replied: "I know the way better than you, child"; and a stately old lady appeared on the threshold.

"Bracegirdle," said Mr. Cibber.

It may well be supposed that every eye was turned on this new-comer, — that Roxana for whom Mr. Cibber's story had prepared a peculiar interest. She was dressed in a rich green velvet gown with gold fringe. Cibber remembered it; she had played the "Eastern Queen," in it. Heaven forgive all concerned! It was fearfully pinched in at the waist and ribs, so as to give the idea of wood inside, not woman.

Her hair and eyebrows were iron-gray, and she had lost a front tooth, or she would still have been eminently handsome. She was tall and straight as a dart, and her noble port betrayed none of the weakness of age, only it was to be seen that her hands were a little weak, and the gold-headed crutch struck the ground rather sharply, as if it did a little limbs'-duty.

Such was the lady who marched into the middle of the room, with a "How do, Colley?" and, looking over the company's heads as if she did not see them, regarded the four walls with some interest. Like a cat, she seemed to think more of places than of folk. The page obsequiously offered her a chair.

"Not so clean as it used to be," said Mrs. Bracegirdle.

Unfortunately, in making this remark, the old lady graciously patted the page's head for offering her the chair; and this action gave, with some of the ill-constituted minds that are ever on the titter, a ridiculous direction to a remark intended, I believe, for the paint and wainscots, &c.

"Nothing is as it used to be," remarked Mr. Cibber.

"All the better for everything," said Mrs. Clive.

"We were laughing at this mighty little David, first actor of this mighty little age."

Now if Mr. Cibber thought to find in the new-comer an ally of the past in its indiscriminate attack upon the present, he was much mistaken; for the old actress made onslaught on this nonsense at once.

"Ay, ay," said she, "and not the first time by many hundreds. 'T is a disease you have. Cure yourself, Colley. Davy Garrick pleases the public; and in trifles like acting, that take nobody to heaven, to please all the world, is to be great. Some pretend to higher aims, but none have 'em. You may hide this from young fools, mayhap, but not from an old 'oman like me. He! he! he! No, no, no, — not from an old 'oman like me."

She then turned round in her chair, and with that sudden, unaccountable snappishness of tone to which the brisk old are subject, she snarled: "Gie me a pinch of snuff, some of ye, do!"

Tobacco dust was instantly at her disposal. She took it with the points of her fingers, delicately, and divested the crime of half its uncleanness and vulgarity, — more an angel could n't.

"Monstrous sensible woman, though!" whispered Quin to Clive.

"Hey, sir! what do you say, sir? for I'm a little deaf." (Not very to praise, it seems.)

"That your judgment, madam, is equal to the reputation of your talent."

The words were hardly spoken, before the old lady rose upright as a tower. She then made an oblique preliminary sweep, and came down with such a courtesy as the young had never seen.

James Quin, not to disgrace his generation, attempted a correspond-

ing bow, for which his figure and apoplectic tendency rendered him unfit; and whilst he was transacting it, the graceful Cibber stepped gravely up, and looked down and up the process with his glass, like a naturalist inspecting some strange capriccio of an orang-outang. The gymnastics of courtesy ended without back-falls, — Cibber lowered his tone.

"You are right, Bracy. It is nonsense denying the young fellow's talent; but his Othello, now, Bracy! be just, — his Othello!"

"O dear! O dear!" cried she; "I thought it was Desdemona's little black boy come in without the tea-kettle."

Quin laughed uproariously.

"It made me laugh a deal more than Mr. Quin's Falstaff. O dear! O dear!"

"Falstaff, indeed! Snuff!" In the tone of a trumpet.

Quin secretly revoked his good opinion of this woman's sense.

"Madam," said the page, timidly, "if you would but favor us with a specimen of the old style!"

"Well, child, why not? Only what makes you mumble like that? but they all do it now, I see. Bless my soul! our words used to come out like brandy-cherries; but now a sentence is like raspberry-jam, on the stage and off."

Cibber chuckled.

"And why don't you men carry yourself like Cibber here?"

"Don't press that question," said Colley, dryly.

"A monstrous poor actor, though," said the merciless old woman, in a mock aside to the others; "only twenty shillings a week for half his life"; and her shoulders went up to her ears, — then she fell into a half-revery. "Yes, we were distinct," said she; "but I must own, children, we were slow. Once, in the midst of a beautiful tirade, my lover went to sleep, and fell against me. A mighty pretty epigram, twenty lines, was writ on't by one of my gallants. Have ye as many of them as we used?"

"In that respect," said the page, "we are not behind our great-grandmothers."

"I call that pert," said Mrs. Bracegirdle, with the air of one drawing scientific distinctions. "Now, is that a boy or a lady that spoke to me last?"

"By its dress, I should say a boy," said Cibber, with his glass; "by its assurance, a lady!"

"There 's one clever woman amongst ye; Peg something, plays Lothario, Lady Betty Modish, and what not?"

"What! admire Woffington?" screamed Mrs. Clive; "why, she is the greatest gabbler on the stage."

"I don't care," was the reply, "there 's nature about the jade. Don't contradict me," added she, with sudden fury; "a parcel of children."

"No, madam," said Clive, humbly. "Mr. Cibber, will you try and prevail on Mrs. Bracegirdle to favor us with a recitation?"

Cibber handed his cane with pomp to a small actor. Bracegirdle did the same; and, striking the attitudes that had passed for heroic in their day, they declaimed out of the "Rival Queens" two or three tirades, which I graciously spare the reader of this tale. Their elocution was neat and silvery; but not one bit like the way people speak in streets, palaces, fields, roads, and rooms. They had not made the grand discovery, which Mr. A. Wigan on the stage, and every man of sense off it, has made in our day and nation; namely, that the stage is a representation, not of stage, but of life; and that an actor ought to speak and act in imitation of human beings, not of speaking machines that have run and creaked in a stage groove, with their eyes shut upon the world at large, upon nature, upon truth, upon man, upon woman, and upon child.

"This is slow," cried Cibber; "let us show these young people how

ladies and gentlemen moved fifty years ago, *dansons*."

A fiddler was caught, a beautiful slow minuet played, and a bit of "solemn dancing" done. Certainly, it was not gay, but it must be owned it was beautiful; it was the dance of kings, the poetry of the courtly saloon.

The retired actress, however, had frisker notions left in her. "This is slow," cried she, and bade the fiddler play, "The wind that shakes the barley," an ancient jig tune; this she danced to in a style that utterly astounded the spectators.

She showed them what fun was; her feet and her stick were all echoes to the mad strain; out went her heel behind, and, returning, drove her four yards forward. She made unaccountable slants, and cut them all over in turn if they did not jump for it. Roars of inextinguishable laughter arose, it would have made an oyster merry. Suddenly she stopped, and put her hands to her sides, and soon after she gave a vehement cry of pain.

The laughter ceased.

She gave another cry of such agony, that they were all round her in a moment.

"O, help me, ladies," screamed the poor woman, in tones as feminine as they were heart-rending and piteous. "O my back! my loins! I suffer, gentlemen," said the poor thing, faintly.

What was to be done? Mr. Vane offered his penknife to cut her laces.

"You shall cut my head off sooner," cried she, with sudden energy. "Don't pity me," said she, sadly, "I don't deserve it"; then, lifting her eyes, she exclaimed, with a sad air of self-reproach: "O vanity! do you never leave a woman?"

"Nay, madam!" whimpered the page, who was a good-hearted girl; "'t was your great complaisance for us, not vanity. Oh! oh! oh!" and she began to blubber, to make matters better.

"No, my children," said the old lady, "'t was vanity. I wanted to show you what an old 'oman could do; and I have humiliated myself, trying to outshine younger folk. I am justly humiliated, as you see"; and she began to cry a little.

"This is very painful," said Cibber.

Mrs. Bracegirdle now raised her eyes (they had set her in a chair), and looking sweetly, tenderly, and earnestly on her old companion, she said to him, slowly, gently, but impressively: "Colley, at threescore years and ten, this was ill done of us! You and I are here now—for what? to cheer the young up the hill we mounted years ago. And, old friend, if we detract from them we discourage them. A great sin in the old!"

"Every dog his day."

"We have had ours." Here she smiled, then, laying her hand tenderly in the old man's, she added, with calm solemnity: "And now we must go quietly towards our rest, and strut and fret no more the few last minutes of life's fleeting hour."

How tame my cacotype of these words compared with what they were. I am ashamed of them and myself, and the human craft of writing, which, though commoner far, is so miserably behind the godlike art of speech: *Si ipsam audivisses!*

These ink scratches, which in the imperfection of language we have called words, till the unthinking actually dream they are words, but which are the shadows of the corpses of words; these word-shadows then were living powers on her lips, and subdued, as eloquence always does, every heart within reach of the imperial tongue.

The young loved her, and the old man, softened and vanquished, and mindful of his failing life, was silent, and pressed his handkerchief to his eyes a moment; then he said:—

"No, Bracy, no. Be composed, I pray you. She is right. Young people, forgive me that I love the dead too well, and the days when I was

what you are now. Drat the woman," continued he, half ashamed of his emotion; "she makes us laugh, and makes us cry, just as she used."

"What does he say, young woman?" said the old lady, dryly, to Mrs. Clive.

"He says you make us laugh, and make us cry, madam; and so you do me, I 'm sure."

"And that 's Peg Woffington's notion of an actress! Better it, Cibber and Bracegirdle, if you can," said the other, rising up like lightning.

She then threw Colley Cibber a note, and walked coolly and rapidly out of the room, without looking once behind her.

The rest stood transfixed, looking at one another, and at the empty chair. Then Cibber opened and read the note aloud. It was from Mrs. Bracegirdle: "Playing at tric-trac; so can't play the fool in your green-room to-night. — B."

On this, a musical ringing laugh was heard from outside the door, where the pseudo Bracegirdle was washing the gray from her hair, and the wrinkles from her face, — ah! I wish I could do it as easily! — and the little bit of sticking-plaster from her front tooth.

"Why, it is the Irish jade!" roared Cibber.

"Divil a less!" rang back a rich brogue; "and it 's not the furst time we put the comether upon ye, England, my jewal!"

One more mutual glance, and then the mortal cleverness of all this began to dawn on their minds; and they broke forth into clapping of hands, and gave this accomplished *mime* three rounds of applause; Mr. Vane and Sir Charles Pomander leading with, "Brava, Woffington!"

Its effect on Mr. Vane may be imagined. Who but she could have done this? This was as if a painter should so paint a man as to deceive his species. This was acting, but not like the acting of the stage. He was in transports, and self-satisfaction at his own judgment mingled pleasantly with his admiration.

In this cheerful exhibition, one joined not, — Mr. Cibber. His theories had received a shock (and we all love our theories). He himself had received a rap, and we don't hate ourselves.

Great is the syllogism! But there is a class of arguments less vulnerable.

If A says to B, "You can't hit me, as I prove by this syllogism" (here followeth the syllogism), "and B, *pour toute réponse*, knocks A down such a whack that he rebounds into a sitting posture; and to him the man, the tree, the lamp-post, and the fire-escape become not clearly distinguishable; this barbarous logic prevails against the logic in Barbara, and the syllogism is in the predicament of Humpty Dumpty.

In this predicament was the Poet Laureate. "The miscreant Proteus (could not) escape these chains!" So the miscreant Proteus — no bad name for an old actor — took his little cocked hat and marched, a smaller, if not a wiser man. Some disjointed words fell from him: "Mimicry is not acting," &c.; and with one bitter, mowing glance at the applauders, *circumferens acriter oculos*, he vanished in the largest pinch of snuff on record. The rest dispersed more slowly.

Mr. Vane waited eagerly, and watched the door for Mrs. Woffington; but she did not come. He then made acquaintance with good-natured Mr. Quin, who took him upon the stage and showed him by what vulgar appliances that majestic rise of the curtain he so admired was effected. Returning to the green-room for his friend, he found him in animated conversation with Mrs. Woffington. This made Vane uneasy.

Sir Charles, up to the present moment of the evening, had been unwontedly silent, and now he was talking nineteen to the dozen, and Mrs. Woffington was listening with an appearance of interest that sent a

pang to poor Vane's heart; he begged Mr. Quin to introduce him.

Mr. Quin introduced him.

The lady received his advances with polite composure. Mr. Vane stammered his admiration of her Bracegirdle; but all he could find words to say was mere general praise, and somewhat coldly received. Sir Charles, on the contrary, spoke more like a critic. "Had you given us the stage cackle, or any of those traditionary symptoms of old age, we should have instantly detected you," said he; "but this was art copying nature, and it may be years before such a triumph of illusion is again effected under so many adverse circumstances."

"You are very good, Sir Charles," was the reply. "You flatter me. It was one of those things which look greater than they are; nobody here knew Bracegirdle but Mr. Cibber; Mr. Cibber cannot see well without his glasses, and I got rid of one of the candles; I sent one of the imps of the theatre to knock it down. I know Mrs. Bracegirdle by heart. I drink tea with her every Sunday. I had her dress on, and I gave the old boy her words and her way of thinking; it was mere mimicry; it was nothing compared with what I once did; but, a-hem!"

"Pray tell us!"

"I am afraid I shall shock your friend. I see he is not a wicked man like you, and perhaps does not know what good-for-nothing creatures actresses are."

"He is not so ignorant as he looks," replied Sir Charles.

"That is not quite the answer I expected, Sir Charles," replied this lively lady; "but it serves me right for fishing on dry land. Well, then, you must know a young gentleman courted me. I forget whether I liked him or not; but you will fancy I hated him, for I promised to marry him. You must understand, gentlemen, that I was sent into the world, not to act, which I abominate, but to chronicle small beer and teach an army of little brats their letters; so this word 'wife,' and that word 'chimney-corner,' took possession of my mind, and a vision of darning stockings for a large party, all my own, filled my heart, and really I felt quite grateful to the little brute that was to give me all this, and he would have had such a wife as men never do have, still less deserve. But one fine day, that the theatre left me time to examine his manner towards me, I instantly discovered he was deceiving me. So I had him watched, and the little brute was going to marry another woman, and break it to me by degrees afterwards, &c. You know, Sir Charles? Ah! I see you do.

"I found her out; got an introduction to her father; went down to his house three days before the marriage, with a little coal-black mustache, regimentals, and what not, made up, in short, with the art of my sex, gentlemen, — and the impudence of yours.

"The first day I flirted and danced with the bride. The second I made love to her, and at night I let her know that her intended was a villain. I showed her letters of his; protestations, oaths of eternal fidelity to one Peg Woffington, 'who will die,' drawled I, 'if he betrays her.'

"And here, gentlemen, mark the justice of Heaven. I received a back-handed slap: 'Peg Woffington! an actress! O, the villain!' cried she; 'let him marry the little vagabond. How dare he insult me with his hand that had been offered in such a quarter?'

"So, in a fit of virtuous indignation, the little hypocrite dismissed the little brute; in other words, she had fallen in love with me.

"I have not had many happy hours, but I remember it was delicious to look out of my window, and at the same moment smell the honeysuckles and see my *perfide* dismissed under a heap of scorn and a pile of luggage he had brought down for his wedding tour.

"I scampered up to London, laughing all the way; and when I got home, if I remember right, I cried for two hours. How do you account for that?"

"I hope, madam," said Vane, gravely, "it was remorse for having trifled with that poor young lady's heart; she had never injured you."

"But, sir, the husband I robbed her of was a brute and a villain in his little way, and wicked and good-for-nothing, &c. He would have deceived that poor little hypocrite, as he had this one," pointing to herself.

"That is not what I mean; you inspired her with an attachment, never to be forgotten. Poor lady, how many sleepless nights has she passed since then, how many times has she strained her eyes to see her angel lover returning to her! She will not forget in two years the love it cost you but two days to inspire. The powerful should be merciful. Ah! I fear you have no heart."

These words had no sooner burst from Mr. Vane, than he was conscious of the strange liberty he had taken, and, indeed, the bad taste he had been guilty of; and this feeling was not lessened when he saw Mrs. Woffington color up to the temples. Her eyes, too, glittered like basilisks: but she said nothing, which was remarkable in her, whose tongue was the sword of a *maître d'armes*.

Sir Charles eyed his friend in a sly, satirical manner; he then said, laughingly: "In two months *she married a third!* don't waste your sympathy," and turned the talk into another channel; and soon after, Mrs. Woffington's maid appearing at the door, she courtesied to both gentlemen and left the theatre. Sir Charles Pomander accompanied Mr. Vane a little way.

"What becomes of her innocence?" was his first word.

"One loses sight of it in her immense talent," said the lover.

"She certainly is clever in all that bears upon her business," was the reply; "but I noticed you were a little shocked with her indelicacy in telling us that story, and still more in having it to tell."

"Indelicacy? No!" said Vane; "the little brute deserved it. Good Heavens! to think that 'a little brute' might have married that angel, and actually broke faith to lose her; it is incredible, the crime is diluted by the absurdity."

"Have you heard him tell the story? No? Then take my word for it, you have not heard the facts of the case."

"Ah! you are prejudiced against her?"

"On the contrary, I like her. But I know that with all women the present lover is an angel and the past a demon, and so on in turn. And I know that if Satan were to enter the women of the stage, with the wild idea of impairing their veracity, he would come out of their minds a greater liar than he went in, and the innocent darlings would never know their spiritual father had been at them."

Doubtful whether this sentiment and period could be improved, Sir Charles parted with his friend, leaving his sting in him like a friend; the other's reflections as he sauntered home were not strictly those of a wise, well-balanced mind; they ran in this style:—

"When she said, 'Is not that to praise my person at the expense of my wit?' I ought to have said, 'Nay, madam; could your wit disguise your person, it would betray itself, so you would still shine confessed'; and instead of that I said nothing!"

He then ran over in his mind all the opportunities he had had for putting in something smart, and bitterly regretted those lost opportunities; and made the smart things, and beat the air with them. Then his cheeks tingled when he remembered that he had almost scolded her; and he concocted a very different speech, and straightway repeated it in imagination.

This is lovers' pastime; I own it funny; but it is open to one objection, this single practice of sitting upon eggs no longer chickenable, carried to a habit, is capable of turning a solid intellect into a liquid one, and ruining a mind's career.

We leave Mr. Vane, therefore, with a hope that he will not do it every night; and we follow his friend to the close of our chapter.

Hey for a definition!

What is diplomacy? Is it folly in a coat that looks like sagacity? Had Sir Charles Pomander, instead of watching Mr. Vane and Mrs. Woffington, asked the former whether he admired the latter, and whether the latter responded, straightforward Vane would have told him the whole truth in a minute. Diplomacy therefore was, as it often is, a waste of time.

But diplomacy did more in this case, it *sapienter descendebat in fossam*; it fell on its nose with gymnastic dexterity, as it generally does, upon my word.

To watch Mrs. Woffington's face *vis-à-vis* Mr. Vane, Pomander introduced Vane to the green-room of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. By this Pomander learned nothing, because Mrs. Woffington had, with a wonderful appearance of openness, the closest face in Europe when she chose.

On the other hand, by introducing this country gentleman to this green-room, he gave a mighty impulse and opportunity to Vane's love; an opportunity which he forgot the timid, inexperienced Damon might otherwise never have found.

Here diplomacy was not policy, for, as my sagacious reader has perhaps divined, Sir Charles Pomander *was after her himself.*

CHAPTER III.

Yes, Sir Charles was *after* Miss Woffington. I use that phrase because it is a fine generic one, suitable to different kinds of love-making.

Mr. Vane's sentiments were an inexplicable compound; but respect, enthusiasm, and deep admiration were the uppermost.

The good Sir Charles was no enigma: he had a vacancy in his establishment, — a very high situation, too, for those who like that sort of thing, — the head of his table, his left hand when he drove in the Park, &c. To this he proposed to promote Miss Woffington. She was handsome and witty, and he liked her. But that was not what caused him to pursue her; slow, sagacious, inevitable, as a beagle.

She was celebrated, and would confer great *éclat* on him. The scandal of possessing her was a burning temptation. Women admire celebrity in a man; but men adore it in a woman.

> "The world," says Philip, "is a famous man;
> What will not women love so taught?"

I will try to answer this question.

The women will more readily forgive disgusting physical deformity for Fame's sake than we. They would embrace with more rapture a famous orang-outang, than we an illustrious chimpanzee; but when it comes to moral deformity the tables are turned.

Had the Queen pardoned Mr. Greenacre and Mrs. Manning, would the great rush have been on the hero, or the heroine? Why, on Mrs. Macbeth! To her would the blackguards have brought honorable proposals, and the gentry liberal ones.

Greenacre would have found more female admirers than I ever shall; but the grand stream of sexual admiration would have set Mariawards. This fact is as dark as night; but it is as sure as the sun.

The next day "the friends" (most laughable of human substantives!) met in the theatre, and again visited the green-room; and this time Vane determined to do himself more justice. He was again disappointed; the actress's manner was ceremoniously polite. She was almost con-

stantly on the stage, and in a hurry when off it; and, when there was a word to be got with her, the ready, glib Sir Charles was sure to get it. Vane could not help thinking it hard that a man who professed no respect for her should thus keep the light from him; and he could hardly conceal his satisfaction when Pomander, at night, bade him farewell for a fortnight. Pressing business took Sir Charles into the country.

The good Sir Charles, however, could not go without leaving his sting behind as a companion to his friend. He called on Mr. Vane, and after a short preface, containing the words "our friendship," "old kindness," "my greater experience," he gravely warned him against Mrs. Woffington.

"Not that I would say this if you could take her for what she is, and amuse yourself with her as she will with you, if she thinks it worth her while. But I see you have a heart, and she will make a football of it, and torment you beyond all you have ever conceived of human anguish."

Mr. Vane colored high, and was about to interrupt the speaker; but he continued: —

"There, I am in a hurry. But ask Quin, or anybody who knows her history, you will find she has had scores of lovers, and no one remains her friend after they part."

"Men are such villains!"

"Very likely," was the reply; "but twenty men don't ill-use one good woman: those are not the proportions. Adieu!"

This last hit frightened Mr. Vane, he began to look into himself; he could not but feel that he was a mere child in this woman's hands; and, more than that, his conscience told him that, if his heart should be made a football of, it would only be a just and probable punishment. For there were particular reasons why he, of all men, had no business to look twice at any woman whose name was Woffington.

That night he avoided the green-room, though he could not forego the play; but the next night he determined to stay at home altogether. Accordingly, at five o'clock, the astounded box-keeper wore a visage of dismay, — there was no shilling for him! and Mr. Vane's nightly shilling had assumed the sanctity of salary in his mind.

Mr. Vane strolled disconsolate; he strolled by the Thames, he strolled up and down the Strand; and, finally, having often admired the wisdom of moths in their gradual approach to what is not good for them, he strolled into the green-room, Covent Garden, and sat down. When there he did not feel happy. Besides, she had always been cold to him, and had given no sign of desiring his acquaintance, still less of recognition.

Mr. Vane had often seen a weathercock at work, and he had heard a woman compared to it; but he had never realized the simplicity, beauty, and justice of the simile. He was therefore surprised, as well as thrilled, when Mrs. Woffington, so cool, ceremonious, and distant hitherto, walked up to him in the green-room with a face quite wreathed in smiles, and, without preliminary, thanked him for all the beautiful flowers he had sent her.

"What, Mrs. Woffington, — what, you recognize me?"

"Of course, and have been foolish enough to feel quite supported by the thought I had at least one friend in the house. But," said she, looking down, "now you must not be angry; here are some stones that have fallen somehow among the flowers, I am going to give you them back, because I value flowers, so I cannot have them mixed with anything else; but don't ask me for a flower back," added she, seeing the color mount on his face, "for I would not give one of them to you, or anybody."

Imagine the effect of this on a romantic disposition like Mr. Vane's.

He told her how glad he was that she could distinguish his features

amidst the crowd of her admirers; he confessed he had been mortified when he found himself, as he thought, entirely a stranger to her.

She interrupted him.

"Do you know your friend Sir Charles Pomander? No! I am almost sure you do; well, he is a man I do not like. He is deceitful, besides he is a wicked man. There, to be plain with you, he was watching me all that night, the first time you came here, and, because I saw he was watching me, I would not know who you were, nor anything about you."

"But you looked as if you had never seen me before."

"Of course I did, when I had made up my mind to," said the actress, naïvely.

"Sir Charles has left London for a fortnight, so, if he is the only obstacle, I hope you will know me every night."

"Why, you sent me no flowers yesterday or to-day."

"But I will to-morrow."

"Then I am sure I shall know your face again: good by. Won't you see me in the last act, and tell me how ill I do it?"

"O yes!" and he hurried to his box, and so the actress secured one pair of hands for her last act.

He returned to the green-room, but she did not revisit that verdant bower. The next night, after the usual compliments, she said to him, looking down with a sweet, engaging air: —

"I sent a messenger into the country to know about that lady."

"What lady?" said Vane, scarcely believing his senses.

"That you were so unkind to me about."

"I, unkind to you? what a brute I must be!"

"My meaning is, you justly rebuked me, only you should not tell an actress she has no heart, — that is always understood. Well, Sir Charles Pomander said she married a third in two months!"

"And did she?"

"No, it was in six weeks; that man never tells the truth; and since then she has married a fourth."

"I am glad of it!"

"So am I, since you awakened my conscience."

Delicious flattery! and of all flattery the sweetest, when a sweet creature does flattery, not merely utters it.

After this, Vane made no more struggles; he surrendered himself to the charming seduction, and as his advances were respectful, but ardent and incessant, he found himself at the end of a fortnight Mrs. Woffington's professed lover.

They wrote letters to each other every day. On Sunday they went to church together in the morning, and spent the afternoon in the suburbs wherever grass was and dust was not.

In the next fortnight, poor Vane thought he had pretty well fathomed this extraordinary woman's character. Plumb the Atlantic with an eighty-fathom line, sir!

"She is religious," said he, "she loves a church much better than a playhouse, and she never laughs nor goes to sleep in church as I do. And she is breaking me of swearing, — by degrees. She says that no fashion can justify what is profane, and that it must be vulgar as well as wicked. And she is frankness and simplicity itself."

Another thing that charmed him was her disinterestedness. She ordered him to buy her a present every day, but it was never to cost above a shilling. If an article could be found that cost exactly tenpence (a favorite sum of hers), she was particularly pleased, and these shilling presents were received with a flush of pleasure and brightening eyes: but when one day he appeared with a diamond necklace, it was taken very coldly, he was not even thanked for it, and he was made to feel, once for all, that the tenpenny ones were the best investments towards her favor.

Then he found out that she was

very prudent and rather stingy; of Spartan simplicity in her diet, and a scorner of dress off the stage. To redeem this she was charitable, and her charity and her economy sometimes had a sore fight, during which she was peevish, poor little soul.

One day she made him a request.

"I can't bear you should think me worse than I am, and I don't want you to think me better than I am."

Vane trembled.

"But don't speak to others about me; promise, and I will promise to tell you my whole story, whenever you are entitled to such a confidence."

"When shall I be entitled to it?"

"When I am sure you love me."

"Do you doubt that now?"

"Yes! I think you love me, but I am not sure."

"Margaret, remember I have known you much longer than you have known me."

"No!"

"Yes! Two months before we ever spoke I lived upon your face and voice."

"That is to say you looked from your box at me upon the stage, and did not I look from the stage at you?"

"Never! you always looked at the pit, and my heart used to sink."

"On the 17th of May you first came into that box. I noticed you a little, the next day I noticed you a little more; I saw you fancied you liked me, after a while I could not have played without you."

Here was delicious flattery again, and poor Vane believed every word of it.

As for her request and her promise, she showed her wisdom in both these. As Sir Charles observed, it is a wonderful point gained if you allow a woman to tell her story her own way.

How the few facts that are allowed to remain get moulded and twisted out of ugly forms into pretty shapes by those supple, dexterous fingers!

This present story cannot give the life of Mrs. Woffington, but only one great passage therein, as do the epic and dramatic writers; but since there was often great point in any sentences spoken on important occasions by this lady, I will just quote her defence of herself. The reader may be sure she did not play her weakest card; let us give her the benefit.

One day she and Kitty Clive were at it ding-dong; the green-room was full of actors, male and female, but there were no strangers, and the ladies were saying things which the men of this generation only think; at last Mrs. Woffington finding herself roughly, and, as she thought, unjustly handled, turned upon the assembly and said: "What man did ever I ruin in all my life? Speak who can!"

And there was a dead silence.

"What woman is there here at as much as three pounds per week even, that has n't ruined two at the very least?"

Report says there was a dead silence again, until Mrs. Clive perked up, and said she had only ruined one, and that was his own fault!

Mrs. Woffington declined to attach weight to this example. "Kitty Clive is the hook without the bait," said she; and the laugh turned, as it always did, against Peggy's antagonist.

Thus much was speedily shown to Mr. Vane, that, whatever were Mrs. Woffington's intentions towards him, interest had at present nothing to do with them; indeed it was made clear that, even were she to surrender her liberty to him, it would only be as a princess, forging golden chains for herself with her own royal hand.

Another fortnight passed to the mutual satisfaction of the lovers. To Vane it was a dream of rapture to be near this great creature, whom thousands admired at such a distance; to watch over her, to take her to the theatre in a warm shawl, to stand at the wing and receive her as she came radiant from her dressing-room, to watch her from her rear as she stood like some power about to descend on

the stage, to see her falcon-like stoop upon the said stage, and hear the burst of applause that followed, as the report does the flash; to compare this with the spiritless crawl with which common artists went on, tame from their first note to their last; to take her hand when she came off, feel how her nerves were strung like a greyhound's after a race, and her whole frame in a high even glow, with the great Pythoness excitement of art.

And to have the same great creature leaning her head on his shoulder, and listening with a charming complacency, whilst he purred to her of love and calm delights, alternate with still greater triumphs; for he was to turn dramatic writer, for her sake was to write plays, a woman the hero, and love was to inspire him, and passion supply the want of pencraft. (You make me laugh, Mr. Vane!)

All this was heavenly.

And then with all her dash, and fire, and bravado, she was a thorough woman.

"Margaret!"

"Ernest!"

"I want to ask you a question. Did you really cry because that Miss Bellamy had dresses from Paris?"

"It does not seem very likely."

"No, but tell me; did you?"

"Who said I did?"

"Mr. Cibber."

"Old fool!"

"Yes, but did you?"

"Did I what?"

"Cry!"

"Ernest, the minx's dresses were beautiful."

"No doubt. But did you cry?"

"And mine were dirty; I don't care about gilt rags, but dirty dresses, ugh!"

"Tell me, then."

"Tell you what?"

"Did you cry or not?"

"Ah! he wants to find out whether I am a fool, and despise me."

"No, I think I should love you better: for hitherto I have seen no weakness in you, and it makes me uncomfortable."

"Be comforted! Is it not a weakness to like you?"

"You are free from that weakness, or you would gratify my curiosity."

"Be pleased to state, in plain, intelligible English, what you require of me."

"I want to know, in one word, did you cry or not?"

"Promise to tease me no more then, and I'll tell you."

"I promise."

"You won't despise me?"

"Despise you! of course not."

"Well, then, — I don't remember!"

On another occasion, they were seated in the dusk, by the side of the canal in the Park, when a little animal began to potter about on an adjacent bank.

Mrs. Woffington contemplated it with curiosity and delight.

"O you pretty creature!" said she. "Now you are a rabbit: at least, I think so."

"No," said Vane, innocently; "that is a rat."

"Ah! ah! ah!" screamed Mrs. Woffington, and pinched his arm. This frightened the rat, who disappeared. She burst out laughing: "There's a fool! The thing did not frighten me, and the name did. Depend upon it, it's true what they say, — that, off the stage, I am the greatest fool there is. I'll never be so absurd again. Ah! ah! ah! here it is again" (scream and pinch, as before). "Do take me from this horrid place, where monsters come from the great deep."

And she flounced away, looking daggers askant at the place the rat had vacated in equal terror.

All this was silly, but it pleases us men, and contrast is so charming! This same fool was brimful of talent, — and cunning, too, for that matter.

She played late that night, and Mr. Vane saw the same creature, who dared not stay where she was liable to a distant rat, spring upon the

stage as a gay rake, and flash out her rapier, and act valor's king to the life, and seem ready to eat up everybody, King Fear included; and then, after her brilliant sally upon the public, Sir Harry Wildair came and stood beside Mr. Vane.

Her bright skin, contrasted with her powdered periwig, became dazzling. She used little rouge, but that little made her eyes two balls of black lightning. From her high instep to her polished forehead, all was symmetry. Her leg would have been a sculptor's glory; and the curve from her waist to her knee was Hogarth's line itself.

She stood like Mercury new lighted on a heaven-kissing hill. She placed her foot upon the ground, as she might put a hand upon her lover's shoulder. We indent it with our eleven undisguised stone.

Such was Sir Harry Wildair, who stood by Mr. Vane, glittering with diamond buckles, gorgeous with rich satin breeches, velvet coat, ruffles, *pictæ vestis et auri*; and as she bent her long eye-fringes down on him (he was seated), all her fiery charms gradually softened and quivered down to womanhood.

"The first time I was here," said Vane, "my admiration of you broke out to Mr. Cibber; and what do you think he said?"

"That you praised me, for me to hear you. Did you?"

"Acquit me of such meanness."

"Forgive me. It is just what I should have done, had I been courting an actress."

"I think you have not met many ingenuous spirits, dear friend?"

"Not one, my child."

This was a phrase she often applied to him now.

"The old fellow pretended to hear what I said, too; and I am sure you did not, — did you?"

"Guess."

"I guess not."

"I am afraid I must plead guilty. An actress's ears are so quick to hear praise, to tell you the truth, I did catch a word or two, and, 'It told, sir, — it told.'"

"You alarm me! At this rate, I shall never know what you see, hear, or think, by your face."

"When you want to know anything, ask me, and I will tell you; but nobody else shall learn anything, nor even you, any other way."

"Did you hear the feeble tribute of praise I was paying you, when you came in?" inquired Vane.

"No. You did not say that my voice had the compass and variety of nature, and my movements were free and beautiful, whilst the others when in motion were stilts, and coffee-pots when in repose, did you?"

"Something of the sort, I believe," cried Vane, laughing.

"I melted from one fine statue into another, I restored the Antinous to his true sex. — Goose! — Painters might learn their art from me (in my dressing-room, no doubt), and orators revive at my lips the music of Athens, that quelled mad mobs and princes drunk with victory. — Silly fellow! — Praise was never so sweet to me," murmured she, inclining like a goddess of love towards him; and he fastened on two velvet lips, that did not shun the sweet attack, but gently parted with a heavenly sigh; while her heaving bosom and yielding frame and swimming eyes confessed her conqueror.

That morning Mr. Vane had been dispirited, and apparently self-discontented; but at night he went home in a state of mental intoxication. His poetic enthusiasm, his love, his vanity, were all gratified at once. And all these, singly, have conquered Prudence and Virtue a million times.

She had confessed to him that she was disposed to risk her happiness on him; she had begged him to submit to a short probation; and she had promised, if her confidence and esteem remained unimpaired at the close of that period, — which was not to be an unhappy one, — to take advantage of the summer holidays, and cross the

water with him, and forget everything in the world with him, but love.

How was it that the very next morning clouds chased one another across his face? Was it that men are happy but while the chase is doubtful? Was it the letter from Pomander announcing his return, and sneeringly inquiring whether he was still the dupe of Peg Woffington? or was it that same mysterious disquiet which attacked him periodically, and then gave way for a while to pleasure and her golden dreams?

The next day was to be a day of delight. He was to entertain her at his own house; and, to do her honor, he had asked Mr. Cibber, Mr. Quin, and other actors, critics, &c.

Our friend, Sir Charles Pomander, had been guilty of two ingenuities: first, he had written three or four letters, full of respectful admiration, to Mrs. Woffington, of whom he spoke slightingly to Vane; second, he had made a disengenuous purchase.

This purchase was Pompey, Mrs. Woffington's little black slave. It is a horrid fact, but Pompey did not love his mistress: he was a little enamored of her, as small boys are apt to be, but, on the whole, a sentiment of hatred slightly predominated in his little black bosom.

It was not without excuse.

This lady was subject to two unpleasant companions, — sorrow and bitterness. About twice a week she would cry for two hours; and after this class of fit she generally went abroad, and made a round of certain poor or sick *protégés* she had, and returned smiling and cheerful.

But other twice a week she might be seen to sit upon her chair, contracted into half her size, and looking daggers at the universe in general, the world in particular; and on these occasions, it must be owned, she stayed at home, and sometimes whipped Pompey.

Pompey had not the sense to reflect that he ought to have been whipped every day, or the *esprit-de corps* to be consoled by observing that this sort of thing did his mistress good. What he felt was, that his mistress, who did everything well, whipped him with energy and skill; it did not take ten seconds, but still, in that brief period, Pompey found himself dusted and polished off.

The sacred principle of justice was as strong in Mrs. Woffington as in the rest of her sex; she had not one grain of it. When she was not in her tantrums, the mischievous imp was as sacred from check or remonstrance as a monkey, or a lap-dog; and several female servants left the house on his account.

But Nemesis overtook him in the way we have hinted, and it put his little black pipe out.

The lady had taken him out of great humanity; he was fed like a game-cock, and dressed like a Barbaric prince; and once when he was ill his mistress watched him, and nursed him, and tended him with the same white hand that plied the obnoxious whip; and when he died, she alone withheld her consent from his burial, and this gave him a chance black boys never get, and he came to again; but still these tarnation lickings "stuck in him gizzard." So when Sir Charles's agent proposed to him certain silver coins, cheap at a little treachery, the ebony ape grinned till he turned half-ivory, and became a spy in the house of his mistress.

The reader will have gathered that the good Sir Charles had been quietly in London some hours before he announced himself as *paulo post futurum*.

Diamond cut diamond; a diplomatic stole this march upon an actress, and took her black pawn. One for Pomander! (Gun.)

CHAPTER IV.

Triplet, the Cerberus of art, who had the first bark in this legend, and has since been out of hearing, ran

from Lambeth to Covent Garden, on receipt of Mr. Vane's note. But ran he never so quick, he had built a full-sized castle in the air before he reached Bow Street.

The letter hinted at an order upon his muse for amatory verse; delightful task, cheering prospect.

Bid a man whose usual lot it is to break stones for the parish at tenpence the cubic yard, — bid such an one play at marbles with some stone taws for half an hour per day, and pocket one pound one, — bid a poor horse who has drawn those stones about, and browsed short grass by the wayside, — bid him canter a few times round a grassy ring, and then go to his corn, — in short, bid Rosinante change with Pegasus, and you do no more than Mr. Vane's letter held out to Triplet.

The amatory verse of that day was not up-hill work. There was a beaten track on a dead level, and you followed it. You told the tender creature, with a world of circumlocution, that, "without joking now," she was a leper, ditto a tigress, item marble. You next feigned a lucid interval, and to be on the point of detesting your monster, but in twenty more verses love became, as usual, stronger than reason, and you wound up your rotten yarn thus: —

You hugged a golden chain. You drew deeper into your wound a barbed shaft, like — (any wild animal will do, no one of them is such an ass, so you had an equal title to all): and on looking back you saw with horrible complacency that you had inflicted one hundred locusts, five feet long, upon oppressed humanity.

Wont to travel over acres of canvas for a few shillings, and roods of paper on bare speculation, Triplet knew he could make a thousand a year at the above work without thinking.

He came therefore to the box-keeper with his eyes glittering.

"Mr. Vane?"

"Just gone out with a gentleman."

"I'll wait then."

Now Mr. Vane, we know, was in the green-room, and went home by the stage-door. The last thing he thought of was poor Triplet; the rich do not dream how they disappoint the poor. Triplet's castle fell as many a predecessor had. When the lights were put out, he left the theatre with a bitter sigh.

"If this gentleman knew how many sweet children I have, and what a good, patient, suffering wife, sure he would not have chosen me to make a fool of!" said the poor fellow to himself.

In Bow Street, he turned, and looked back upon the theatre. How gloomy and grand it loomed!

"Ah!" thought he, "if I could but conquer you; and why not? All history shows that nothing is unconquerable except perseverance. Hannibal conquered the Alps, and I'll conquer you," cried Triplet, firmly. "Yes, this visit is not lost; here I register a vow: I will force my way into that mountain of masonry, or perish in the attempt."

Triplet's most unpremeditated thoughts and actions often savored ridiculously of the sublime. Then and there, gazing with folded arms on this fortress of Thespis, the polytechnic man organized his first assault. The next evening he made it.

Five months previously he had sent the manager three great, large tragedies. He knew the aversion a theatrical manager has to read a manuscript play, not recommended by influential folk; an aversion which always has been carried to superstition. So he hit on the following scheme: —

He wrote Mr. Rich a letter; in this he told Mr. Rich that he (Triplet) was aware what a quantity of trash is offered every week to a manager, how disheartening it must be to read it at all, and how natural, after a while, to read none. Therefore, he (Triplet) had provided that Mr. Rich might economize his time, and yet not remain in ignorance of the

dramatic treasure that lay ready to his hand.

"The soul of a play," continued Triplet, "is the plot or fable. A gentleman of your experience can decide at once whether a plot or story is one to take the public!"

So then he drew out, in full, the three plots. He wrote these plots in verse! Heaven forgive us all, he really did. There were also two margins left; on one, which was narrow, he jotted down the *locale* per page of the most brilliant passages; on the other margin, which was as wide as the column of the plot, he made careful drawings of the personages in the principal dramatic situations; scrolls issued from their mouths, on which were written the words of fire that were flowing from each in these eruptions of the dramatic action. All was referred to pages in the manuscripts.

"By this means, sir," resumed the latter, "you will gut my fish in a jiffy; permit me to recall that expression, with apologies for my freedom. I would say, you will, in a few minutes of your valuable existence, skim the cream of Triplet."

This author's respect for the manager's time carried him into further and unusual details.

"Breakfast," said he, "is a quiet meal. Let me respectfully suggest, that by placing one of my plots on the table, with, say, the sugar-basin upon it (this, again, is a mere suggestion), and the play it appertains to on your other side; you can readily judge my work without disturbing the avocations of the day, and master a play in the twinkling of a teacup; forgive my facetiousness. This day month, at ten of the clock, I shall expect," said Triplet, with sudden severity, "sir, your decision!"

Then, gliding back to the courtier, he formally disowned all special title to the consideration he expected from Mr. Rich's well-known courtesy; still he begged permission to remind that gentleman, that he had six years ago painted for him a large scene, illuminated by two great poetical incidents: a red sun, of dimensions never seen out of doors in this or any country; and an ocean of sand, yellower than up to that time had been attained in art or nature; and that once, when the audience, late in the evening, had suddenly demanded a popular song from Mr. Nokes, he (Triplet) seeing the orchestra thinned by desertion, and nugatory by intoxication, had started from the pit, resuscitated with the whole contents of his snuff-box the bass fiddle, snatched the leader's violin, and carried Mr. Nokes triumphantly through; that thunders of applause had followed, and Mr. Nokes had kindly returned thanks *for both*; but that he (Triplet) had hastily retired to evade the manager's acknowledgments, preferring to wait an opportunity like the present, when both interests could be conciliated, &c.

This letter he posted at its destination, to save time, and returned triumphant home. He had now forgiven and almost forgotten Vane; and had reflected that, after all, the drama was his proper walk.

"My dear," said he to Mrs. Triplet, "this family is on the eve of a great triumph!" Then, inverting that order of the grandiloquent and the homely which he invented in our first chapter, he proceeded to say: "I have reared in a single day a new avenue by which histrionic greatness, hitherto obstructed, may become accessible. Wife, I think I have done the trick at last. Lysimachus!" added he, "let a libation be poured out on so smiling an occasion, and a burnt-offering rise to propitiate the celestial powers. Run to the 'Sun,' you dog. Three pennyworth of ale, and a hap'orth o' tobacco."

Ere the month was out, I am sorry to say, the Triplets were reduced to a state of beggary. Mrs. Triplet's health had long been failing; and, although her duties at her little theatre were light and occasional, the manager was

obliged to discharge her, since she could not be depended upon.

The family had not enough to eat! Think of that! They were not warm at night, and they felt gnawing and faintness often by day. Think of that!

Fortune was unjust here. The man was laughable, and a goose; and had no genius either for writing, painting, or acting; but in that he resembled most writers, painters, and actors of his own day and ours. He was not beneath the average of what men call art, and it is art's antipodes, — treadmill artifice.

Other fluent ninnies shared gain, and even fame, and were called 'penmen,' in Triplet's day. Other ranters were quietly getting rich by noise. Other liars and humbugs were painting out o' doors in-doors, and eating mutton instead of thistles for drenched stinging-nettles, yclept trees; for block-tin clouds; for butlers' pantry seas, and garret-conceived lakes; for molten sugar-candy rivers; for airless atmosphere and sunless air; for carpet nature, and cold, dead fragments of an earth all soul and living glory to every cultivated eye but a routine painter's. Yet the man of many such mediocrities could not keep the pot boiling. We suspect that, to those who would rise in life, even strong versatility is a very doubtful good, and weak versatility ruination.

At last, the bitter, weary month was gone, and Triplet's eye brightened gloriously. He donned his best suit; and, whilst tying his cravat, lectured his family. First, he complimented them upon their deportment in adversity; hinted that moralists, not experience, had informed him prosperity was far more trying to the character. Put them all solemnly on their guard down to Lucy, *ætat* five, that they were *morituri* and *æ*, and must be pleased to abstain from "insolent gladness" upon his return.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity!" continued this cheerful monitor. "If we had not been hard up this while, we should not come with a full relish to meat three times a week, which, unless I am an ass (and I don't see myself in that light)," said Triplet, dryly, "will, I apprehend, be, after this day, the primary condition of our future existence."

"James, take the picture with you," said Mrs. Triplet, in one of those calm, little, desponding voices that fall upon the soul so agreeably when one is a cock-a-hoop, and desires, with permission, so to remain.

"What on earth am I to take Mrs. Woffington's portrait for?"

"We have nothing in the house," said the wife, blushing.

Triplet's eye glittered like a rattlesnake's.

"The intimation is eccentric," said he. "Are you mad, Jane? Pray," continued he, veiling his wrath in scornful words, "is it requisite, heroic, or judicious on the eve, or more correctly the morn, of affluence to deposit an unfinished work of art with a mercenary relation? Hang it, Jane! would you really have me pawn Mrs. Woffington to-day?"

"James," said Jane, steadily, "the manager may disappoint you, we have often been disappointed; so take the picture with you. They will give you ten shillings on it."

Triplet was of those who see things roseate, Mrs. Triplet lurid.

"Madam," said the poet, "for the first time in our conjugal career, your commands deviate so entirely from reason, that I respectfully withdraw that implicit obedience which has hitherto constituted my principal reputation. I'm hanged if I do it, Jane!"

"Dear James, to oblige me!"

"That alters the case; you confess it is unreasonable?"

"O yes! it is only to oblige me."

"Enough!" said Triplet, whose tongue was often a flail that fell on friend, foe, and self indiscriminately. "Allow it to be unreasonable, and I do it as a matter of course, — to please you, Jane."

Accordingly the good soul wrapped it in green baize; but to relieve his mind he was obliged to get behind his wife, and shrug his shoulders to Lysimachus and the eldest girl, as who should say *voilà bien une femme votre mère a vous!*

At last he was off, in high spirits. He reached Covent Garden at half-past ten, and there the poor fellow was sucked into our narrative whirlpool.

We must, however, leave him for a few minutes.

CHAPTER V.

Sir Charles Pomander was detained in the country much longer than he expected.

He was rewarded by a little adventure. As he cantered up to London with two servants and a post-boy, all riding on horses ordered in relays beforehand, he came up with an antediluvian coach, stuck fast by the roadside. Looking into the window, with the humane design of quizzing the elders who should be there, he saw a young lady of surpassing beauty. This altered the case; Sir Charles instantly drew bridle and offered his services.

The lady thanked him, and being an innocent country lady, she opened those sluices, her eyes, and two tears gently trickled down, while she told him how eager she was to reach London, and how mortified at this delay.

The good Sir Charles was touched. He leaped his horse over a hedge, galloped to a farm-house in sight, and returned with ropes and rustics. These and Sir Charles's horses soon drew the coach out of some stiffish clay.

The lady thanked him, and thanked him, and thanked him, with heightening color and beaming eyes, and he rode away like a hero.

Before he had gone five miles he became thoughtful and self-dissatisfied, finally his remorse came to a head; he called to him the keenest of his servants, Hunsdon, and ordered him to ride back past the carriage, then follow and put up at the same inn, to learn who the lady was, and whither going; and, this knowledge gained, to ride into town full speed and tell his master all about it. Sir Charles then resumed his complacency, and cantered into London that same evening.

Arrived there, he set himself in earnest to cut out his friend with Mrs. Woffington. He had already caused his correspondence with that lady to grow warm and more tender by degrees. Keeping a copy of his last, he always knew where he was. Cupid's barometer rose by rule; and so he arrived by just gradations at an artful climax, and made her in terms of chivalrous affection, an offer of a house, &c., three hundred a year, &c., not forgetting his heart, &c. He knew that the ladies of the stage have an ear for flattery and an eye to the main chance.

The good Sir Charles felt sure that, however she might flirt with Vane or others, she would not forego a position for any disinterested *penchant*. Still, as he was a close player, he determined to throw a little cold water on that flame. His plan, like everything truly scientific, was simple.

"I'll run her down to him, and ridicule him to her," resolved this faithful friend and lover dear.

He began with Vane. He found him just leaving his own house. After the usual compliments, some such dialogue as this took place between Telemachus and pseudo Mentor: —

"I trust you are not really in the power of this actress?"

"You are the slave of a word," replied Vane. "Would you confound black and white because both are colors? She is like that sisterhood in nothing but a name. Even on the stage they have nothing in common. They are puppets, — all attitude and trick: she is all ease, grace, and nature."

"Nature!" cried Pomander. "*Laissez-moi tranquille.* They have artifice, — nature's libel. She has art, — nature's counterfeit."

"Her voice is truth told by music," cried the poetical lover; "theirs are jingling instruments of falsehood."

"They are all instruments," said the satirist; "she is rather the best tuned and played."

"Her face speaks in every lineament; theirs are rouged and wrinkled masks."

"Her mask is the best made, mounted, and moved; that is all."

"She is a fountain of true feeling."

"No; a pipe that conveys it without spilling or holding a drop."

"She is an angel of talent, sir."

"She 's a devil of deception."

"She is a divinity to worship."

"She 's a woman to fight shy of. There is not a woman in London better known," continued Sir Charles. "She is a fair actress on the boards, and a great actress off them; but I can tell you how to add a new charm to her."

"Heaven can only do that," said Vane, hastily.

"Yes, you can. Make her blush. Ask her for the list of your predecessors."

Vane winced visibly. He quickened his step, as if to get rid of this gadfly.

"I spoke to Mr. Quin," said he, at last; "and he, who has no prejudice, paid her character the highest compliment."

"You have paid it the highest it admits," was the reply. "You have let it deceive you." Sir Charles continued in a more solemn tone: "Pray be warned. Why is it every man of intellect loves an actress once in his life, and no man of sense ever did it twice?"

This last hit, coming after the carte and tierce we have described, brought an expression of pain to Mr. Vane's face. He said abruptly: "Excuse me, I desire to be alone for half an hour."

Machiavel bowed; and, instead of taking offence, said, in a tone full of feeling: "Ah! I give you pain! But you are right; think it calmly over awhile, and you will see I advise you well."

He then made for the theatre, and the weakish personage he had been playing upon walked down to the river, almost ran, in fact. He wanted to be out of sight.

He got behind some houses, and then his face seemed literally to break loose from confinement; so anxious, sad, fearful, and bitter were the expressions that coursed each other over that handsome countenance.

What is the meaning of these hot and cold fits? It is not Sir Charles who has the power to shake Mr. Vane so without some help from within. *There is something wrong about this man!*

CHAPTER VI.

MACHIAVEL entered the green-room, intending to wait for Mrs. Woffington, and carry out the second part of his plan.

He knew that weak minds cannot make head against ridicule, and with this pickaxe he proposed to clear the way, before he came to grave, sensible, business love with the lady. Machiavel was a man of talent. If he has been a silent personage hitherto, it is merely because it was not his cue to talk, but listen; otherwise, he was rather a master of the art of speech. He could be insinuating, eloquent, sensible, or satirical, at will. This personage sat in the green-room. In one hand was his diamond snuff-box, in the other a richly laced handkerchief; his clouded cane reposed by his side.

There was an air of success about this personage. The gentle reader, however conceited a dog, could not see how he was to defeat Sir Charles,

who was tall, stout, handsome, rich, witty, self-sufficient, cool, majestic, courageous, and in whom were united the advantages of a hard head, a tough stomach, and no heart at all.

This great creature sat expecting Mrs. Woffington, like Olympian Jove awaiting Juno. But he was mortal after all; for suddenly the serenity of that adamantine countenance was disturbed; his eye dilated; his grace and dignity were shaken. He huddled his handkerchief into one pocket, his snuff-box into another, and forgot his cane. He ran to the door in unaffected terror.

Where are all his fine airs before a real danger? Love, intrigue, diplomacy, were all driven from his mind; for he beheld that approaching, which is the greatest peril and disaster known to social man. He saw a bore coming into the room!

In a wild thirst for novelty, Pomander had once penetrated to Goodman's Fields Theatre; there he had unguardedly put a question to a carpenter behind the scene; a seedy-black poet instantly pushed the carpenter away (down a trap it is thought), and answered it in seven pages, and in continuation was so vaguely communicative, that he drove Sir Charles back into the far west.

Sir Charles knew him again in a moment, and at sight of him bolted. They met at the door. "Ah! Mr. Triplet!" said the fugutive, "enchanted — to wish you good morning!" and he plunged into the hiding-places of the theatre.

"That is a very polite gentleman!" thought Triplet. He was followed by the call-boy, to whom he was explaining that his avocations, though numerous, would not prevent his paying Mr. Rich the compliment of waiting all day in his green-room, sooner than go without an answer to three important propositions, in which the town and the arts were concerned.

"What is your name?" said the boy of business to the man of words.

"Mr. Triplet," said Triplet.

"Triplet? There is something for you in the hall," said the urchin, and went off to fetch it.

"I knew it," said Triplet to himself; "they are accepted. There's a note in the hall to fix the reading." He then derided his own absurdity in having ever for a moment desponded. "Master of three arts, by each of which men grow fat, how was it possible he should starve all his days!"

He enjoyed a natural vanity for a few moments, and then came more generous feelings. What sparkling eyes there would be in Lambeth today! The butcher, at sight of Mr. Rich's handwriting, would give him credit. Jane should have a new gown.

But when his tragedies were played, and he paid! El Dorado! His children should be the neatest in the street. Lysimachus and Roxalana should learn the English language, cost what it might; sausages should be diurnal; and he himself would not be puffed up, fat, lazy. No! he would work all the harder, be affable as ever, and, above all, never swamp the father, husband, and honest man in the poet and the blackguard of sentiment.

Next his reflections took a business turn.

"These tragedies — the scenery? O, I shall have to paint it myself. The heroes? Well, they have nobody who will play them as I should. (This was true!) It will be hard work, all this; but then I shall be paid for it. I cannot go on this way: I must and will be paid separately for my branches."

Just as he came to this resolution, the boy returned with a brown-paper parcel, addressed to Mr. James Triplet. Triplet weighed it in his hand; it was heavy. "How is this?" cried he. "O, I see," said he, "these are the tragedies. He sends them to me for some trifling alterations: managers always do." Triplet then de-

termined to adopt these alterations, if judicious; for, argued he, sensibly enough: "Managers are practical men: and we, in the heat of composition, sometimes (*sic?*) say more than is necessary, and become tedious."

With that he opened the parcel, and looked for Mr. Rich's communication; it was not in sight. He had to look between the leaves of the manuscripts for it; it was not there. He shook them; it did not fall out. He shook them as a dog shakes a rabbit; nothing!

The tragedies were returned without a word. It took him some time to realize the full weight of the blow; but at last he saw that the manager of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, declined to take a tragedy by Triplet into consideration or bare examination.

He turned dizzy for a moment. Something between a sigh and a cry escaped him, and he sank upon a covered bench that ran along the wall. His poor tragedies fell here and there upon the ground, and his head went down upon his hands, which rested on Mrs. Woffington's picture. His anguish was so sharp, it choked his breath; when he recovered it, his eye bent down upon the picture. "Ah, Jane," he groaned, "you know this villanous world better than I!" He placed the picture gently on the seat (that picture must now be turned into bread), and slowly stooped for his tragedies; they had fallen hither and thither; he had to crawl about for them; he was an emblem of all the humiliations letters endure.

As he went after them on all-fours, more than one tear pattered on the dusty floor. Poor fellow! he was Triplet, and could not have died without tingeing the death-rattle with some absurdity; but, after all, he was a father driven to despair; a castle-builder, with his work rudely scattered; an artist, brutally crushed and insulted by a greater dunce than himself.

Faint, sick, and dark, he sat a moment on the seat before he could find strength to go home and destroy all the hopes he had raised.

Whilst Triplet sat collapsed on the bench, fate sent into the room all in one moment, as if to insult his sorrow, a creature that seemed the goddess of gayety, impervious to a care. She swept in with a bold, free step, for she was rehearsing a man's part, and thundered without rant, but with a spirit and fire, and pace, beyond the conception of our poor tame actresses of 1852, these lines: —

"Now, by the joys
Which my soul still has uncontrolled pursued,
I would not turn aside from my least pleasure,
Though all thy force were armed to bar my way;
But, like the birds, great Nature's happy commoners,
Rifle the sweets —"

"I beg — your par—don, sir!" holding the book on a level with her eye, she had nearly run over "two poets instead of one."

"Nay, madam," said Triplet, admiring, though sad, wretched, but polite, "pray continue. Happy the hearer, and still happier the author of verses so spoken. Ah!"

"Yes," replied the lady, "if you could persuade authors what we do for them, when we coax good music to grow on barren words. Are you an author, sir?" added she, slyly.

"In a small way, madam. I have here three trifles, — tragedies."

Mrs. Woffington looked askant at them, like a shy mare.

"Ah, madam!" said Triplet, in one of his insane fits, "if I might but submit them to such a judgment as yours?"

He laid his hand on them. It was as when a strange dog sees us go to take up a stone.

The actress recoiled.

"I am no judge of such things," cried she, hastily.

Triplet bit his lip. He could have killed her. It was provoking, people would rather be hung than read a

manuscript. Yet what hopeless trash they will read in crowds, which was manuscript a day ago. *Les imbéciles!*

"No more is the manager of this theatre a judge of such things," cried the outraged quill-driver, bitterly.

"What! has he accepted them?" said needle-tongue.

"No, madam, he has had them six months, and see, madam, he has returned them me without a word."

Triplet's lip trembled.

"Patience, my good sir," was the merry reply. "Tragic authors should possess that, for they teach it to their audiences. Managers, sir, are like Eastern monarchs, inaccessible but to slaves and sultanas. Do you know I called upon Mr. Rich fifteen times before I could see him?"

"You, madam? Impossible!"

"O, it was years ago, and he has paid a hundred pounds for each of those little visits. Well, now, let me see, fifteen times; you must write twelve more tragedies, and then he will read *one;* and when he has read it, he will favor you with his judgment upon it; and when you have got that, you will have what all the world knows is not worth a farthing. He! he! he!

'And like the birds, gay Nature's happy commoners,
Rifle the sweets' — mum — mum — mum."

Her high spirits made Triplet sadder. To think that one word from this laughing lady would secure his work a hearing, and that he dared not ask her. She was up in the world, he was down. She was great, he was nobody. He felt a sort of chill at this woman, — all brains and no heart. He took his picture and his plays under his arms and crept sorrowfully away.

The actress's eye fell on him as he went off like a fifth act. His Don Quixote face struck her. She had seen it before.

"Sir," said she.

"Madam," said Triplet, at the door.

"We have met before. There, don't speak, I'll tell you who you are. Yours is a face that has been good to me, and I never forget them."

"Me, madam!" said Triplet, taken aback. "I trust I know what is due to you better than to be good to you, madam," said he, in his confused way.

"To be sure!" cried she, "it is Mr. Triplet, good Mr. Triplet!" And this vivacious dame, putting her book down, seized both Triplet's hands and shook them.

He shook hers warmly in return out of excess of timidity, and dropped tragedies, and kicked at them convulsively when they were down, for fear they should be in her way, and his mouth opened, and his eyes glared.

"Mr. Triplet," said the lady, "do you remember an Irish orange-girl you used to give sixpence to at Goodman's Fields, and pat her on the head and give her good advice, like a good old soul as you were? She took the sixpence."

"Madam," said Trip, recovering a grain of pomp, "singular as it may appear, I remember the young person; she was very engaging. I trust no harm hath befallen her, for methought I discovered, in spite of her brogue, a beautiful nature in her."

"Go along wid your blarney," answered a rich brogue; "an' is it the comanther ye'd be putting on poor little Peggy?"

"Oh! oh gracious!" gasped Triplet.

"Yes," was the reply; but into that "yes" she threw a whole sentence of meaning. "Fine cha-ney oranges!" chanted she, to put the matter beyond dispute.

"Am I really so honored as to have patted you on that queen-like head!" and he glared at it.

"On the same head which now I wear," replied she, pompously. "I kept it for the convaynience hintirely, only there's more in it. Well, Mr. Triplet, you see what time has done for me; now tell me whether he has

been as kind to you: are you going to speak to me, Mr. Triplet?"

As a decayed hunter stands lean and disconsolate, head poked forward like a goose's, but if hounds sweep by his paddock in full cry, followed by horses who are what he was not, he does by reason of the good blood that is and will be in his heart, *dum spiritus hoss regit artus,* cock his ears, erect his tail, and trot fiery to his extremest hedge, and look over it, nostril distended, mane flowing, and neigh the hunt onward like a trumpet; so Triplet, who had manhood at bottom, instead of whining out his troubles in the ear of encouraging beauty, as a sneaking spirit would, perked up, and resolved to put the best face upon it all before so charming a creature of the other sex.

"Yes, madam," cried he, with the air of one who could have smacked his lips, "Providence has blessed me with an excellent wife and four charming children. My wife was Miss Chatterton: you remember her?"

"Yes! Where is she playing now?"

"Why, madam, her health is too weak for it."

"Oh!—You were scene-painter. Do you still paint scenes?"

"With the pen, madam, not the brush: as the wags said, I transferred the distemper from my canvas to my imagination." And Triplet laughed uproariously.

When he had done, Mrs. Woffington, who had joined the laugh, inquired quietly whether his pieces had met with success.

"Eminent—in the closet; the stage is to come!" and he smiled absurdly again.

The lady smiled back.

"In short," said Triplet, recapitulating, "being blessed with health, and more tastes in the arts than most, and a cheerful spirit, I should be wrong, madam, to repine; and this day, in particular, is a happy one," added the rose colorist, "since the great Mrs. Woffington has deigned to remember me, and call me friend."

Such was Triplet's summary.

Mrs. Woffington drew out her memorandum-book, and took down her summary of the crafty Triplet's facts. So easy is it for us Triplets to draw the wool over the eyes of women and Woffingtons.

"Triplet, discharged from scene-painting; wife, no engagement; four children supported by his pen,—that is to say, starving; lose no time!"

She closed her book; and smiled, and said:—

"I wish these things were comedies instead of trash-edies, as the French call them; we would cut one in half, and slice away the finest passages, and then I would act in it: and you would see how the stage-door would fly open at sight of the author."

"O Heaven!" said poor Trip, excited by this picture. "I'll go home, and write a comedy this moment."

"Stay!" said she; "you had better leave the tragedies with me."

"My dear madam! You will read them?"

"Ahem! I will make poor Rich read them."

"But, madam, he has rejected them."

"That is the first step. Reading them comes after, when it comes at all. What have you got in that green baize?"

"In this green baize?"

"Well, in this green baize, then."

"O madam! nothing—nothing! To tell the truth, it is an adventurous attempt from memory. I saw you play Silvia, madam; I was so charmed, that I came every night. I took your face home with me,—forgive my presumption, madam,—and I produced this faint adumbration, which I expose with diffidence."

So then he took the green baize off.

The color rushed into her face; she was evidently gratified. Poor, silly Mrs. Triplet was doomed to be right about this portrait.

"I will give you a sitting," said she. "You will find painting dull faces a better trade than writing dull tragedies. Work for other people's vanity, not your own; that is the art of art. And now I want Mr. Triplet's address."

"On the fly-leaf of each work, madam," replied that florid author, "and also at the foot of every page which contains a particularly brilliant passage, I have been careful to insert the address of James Triplet, painter, actor, and dramatist, and Mrs. Woffington's humble, devoted servant." He bowed ridiculously low, and moved towards the door; but something gushed across his heart, and he returned with long strides to her. "Madam!" cried he, with a jaunty manner, "you have inspired a son of Thespis with dreams of eloquence, you have tuned in a higher key a poet's lyre, you have tinged a painter's existence with brighter colors, and — and —" His mouth worked still, but no more artificial words would come. He sobbed out, "and God in heaven bless you, Mrs. Woffington!" and ran out of the room.

Mrs. Woffington looked after him with interest, for this confirmed her suspicions; but suddenly her expression changed, she wore a look we have not yet seen upon her, — it was a half-cunning, half-spiteful look; it was suppressed in a moment, she gave herself to her book, and presently Sir Charles Pomander sauntered into the room.

"Ah! what, Mrs. Woffington here?" said the diplomate.

"Sir Charles Pomander, I declare!" said the actress.

"I have just parted with an admirer of yours."

"I wish I could part with them all," was the reply.

"A pastoral youth, who means to win La Woffington by agricultural courtship, — As shepherds woo in sylvan shades."

"With oaten pipe the rustic maids,"

quoth the Woffington, improvising.

The diplomate laughed, the actress laughed, and said, laughingly: "*Tell me what he says word for word?*"

"It will only make you laugh."

"Well, and am I never to laugh, who provide so many laughs for you all?"

"*C'est juste.* You shall share the general merriment. Imagine a romantic soul, who adores you for *your simplicity!*"

"My simplicity! Am I so very simple?"

"No," said Sir Charles, monstrous dryly. "He says you are out of place on the stage, and wants to take the star from its firmament, and put it in a cottage."

"I am not a star," replied the Woffington, "I am only a meteor. And what does the man think I am to do without this (here she imitated applause) from my dear public's thousand hands?"

"You are to have this" (he mimicked a kiss) "from a single mouth, instead."

"He is mad! Tell me what more he says. O, don't stop to invent; I should detect you; and you would only spoil this man."

He laughed conceitedly. "I should spoil him! Well, then, he proposes to be your friend rather than your lover, and keep you from being talked of, he! he! instead of adding to your *éclat.*"

"And if he is your friend, why don't you tell him my real character, and send him into the country?"

She said this rapidly and with an appearance of earnest. The diplomatist fell into the trap.

"I do," said he; "but he snaps his fingers at me and common sense and the world. I really think there is only one way to get rid of him, and with him of every annoyance."

"Ah! that would be nice."

"Delicious! I had the honor, madam, of laying certain proposals at your feet."

"Oh! yes, — your letter, Sir Charles. I have only just had time to run my eye down it. Let us examine it together."

She took out the letter with a wonderful appearance of interest, and the diplomate allowed himself to fall into the absurd position to which she invited him. They put their two heads together over the letter.

"'A coach, a country-house, pin-money,' — and I'm so tired of houses and coaches and pins. Oh! yes, here's something; what is this you offer me, up in this corner?"

Sir Charles inspected the place carefully, and announced that it was "his heart."

"And he can't even write it!" said she. "That word is 'earth.' Ah! well, you know best. There is your letter, Sir Charles."

.She courtesied, returned him the letter, and resumed her study of Lothario.

"Favor me with your answer, madam," said her suitor.

"You have it," was the reply.

"Madam, I don't understand your answer," said Sir Charles, stiffly.

"I can't find you answers and understandings too," was the lady-like reply. "You must beat my answer into your understanding whilst I beat this man's verse into mine.

'And like the birds, &c.'"

Pomander recovered himself a little; he laughed with quiet insolence. "Tell me," said he, "do you really refuse?"

"My good soul," said Mrs. Woffington, "why this surprise! Are you so ignorant of the stage and the world as not to know that I refuse such offers as yours every week of my life?"

"I know better," was the cool reply. She left it unnoticed.

"I have so many of these," continued she, "that I have begun to forget they are insults."

At this word the button broke off Sir Charles's foil.

"Insults, madam! They are the highest compliments you have left it in our power to pay you."

The other took the button off her foil.

"Indeed!" cried she, with well-feigned surprise. "Oh! I understand. To be your mistress could be but a temporary disgrace; to be your wife would be a lasting discredit," she continued. "And now, sir, having played your rival's game, and showed me your whole hand" (a light broke in upon our diplomate), "do something to recover the reputation of a man of the world. A gentleman is somewhere about in whom you have interested me by your lame satire; pray tell him I am in the green-room, with no better companion than this bad poet."

Sir Charles clenched his teeth.

"I accept the delicate commission," replied he, "that you may see how easily the man of the world drops what the rustic is eager to pick up."

"That is better," said the actress, with a provoking appearance of good-humor. "You have a woman's tongue, if not her wit; but, my good soul," added she, with cool *hauteur*, "remember you have something to do of more importance than anything you can say."

"I accept your courteous dismissal, madam," said Pomander, grinding his teeth. "I will send a carpenter for your swain: and I leave you."

He bowed to the ground.

"Thanks for the double favor, good Sir Charles."

She courtesied to the floor.

Feminine vengeance! He had come between her and her love. All very clever, Mrs. Actress; but was it wise?

"I am revenged," thought Mrs. Woffington, with a little feminine smirk.

"I will be revenged," vowed Pomander, clenching his teeth.

CHAPTER VII.

COMPARE a November day with a May day. They are not more unlike than a beautiful woman in company with a man she is indifferent to or averse, and the same woman with the man of her heart by her side.

At sight of Mr. Vane, all her coldness and *nonchalance* gave way to a gentle complacency; and when she spoke to him, her voice, so clear and cutting in the late *assaut d'armes*, sank of its own accord into the most tender, delicious tone imaginable.

Mr. Vane and she made love. He pleased her, and she desired to please him. My reader knows her wit, her *finesse*, her fluency; but he cannot conceive how godlike was her way of making love. I can put a few of the corpses of her words upon paper, but where are the heavenly tones, — now calm and convincing, now soft and melancholy, now thrilling with tenderness, now glowing with the fiery eloquence of passion? She told him that she knew the map of his face; that for some days past he had been subject to an influence adverse to her. She begged him, calmly, for his own sake, to distrust false friends, and judge her by his own heart, eyes, and judgment. He promised her he would.

"And I do trust you, in spite of them all," said he; "for your face is the shrine of sincerity and candor. I alone know you."

Then she prayed him to observe the heartlessness of his sex, and to say whether she had done ill to hide the riches of her heart from the cold and shallow, and to keep them all for one honest man, "who will be my friend, I hope," said she, "as well as my lover."

"Ah!" said Vane, "that is my ambition."

"We actresses," said she, "make good the old proverb, 'Many lovers, but few friends.' And O, 't is we who need a friend. Will you be mine?"

Whilst he lived, he would.

In turn, he begged her to be generous, and tell him the way for him, Ernest Vane, inferior in wit and address to many of her admirers, to win her heart from them all.

This singular woman's answer is, I think, worth attention.

"Never act in my presence; never try to be eloquent, or clever; never force a sentiment, or turn a phrase. Remember, I am the goddess of tricks. Do not descend to competition with me and the Pomanders of the world. At all littlenesses, you will ever be awkward in my eyes. And I am a woman. I must have a superior to love, — lie open to my eye. Light itself is not more beautiful than the upright man, whose bosom is open to the day. O yes! fear not you will be my superior, dear; for in me honesty has to struggle against the habits of my art and life. Be simple and sincere, and I shall love you, and bless the hour you shone upon my cold, artificial life. Ah, Ernest!" said she, fixing on his eyes her own, the fire of which melted into tenderness as she spoke, "be my friend. Come between me and the temptations of an unprotected life, — the recklessness of a vacant heart."

He threw himself at her feet. He called her an angel. He told her he was unworthy of her, but that he would try and deserve her. Then he hesitated, and trembling he said: —

"I will be frank and loyal. Had I not better tell you everything? You will not hate me for a confession I make myself?"

"I shall like you better, — oh! so much better!"

"Then I will own to you —"

"O, do not tell me you have ever loved before me! I could not bear to hear it!" cried this inconsistent personage.

The other weak creature needed no more.

"I see plainly I never loved but you," said he.

"Let me hear that only!" cried

she; "I am jealous even of the past. Say you never loved but me: never mind whether it is true. My child, you do not even yet know love. Ernest, shall I make you love, — as none of your sex ever loved, — with heart, and brain, and breath, and life, and soul?"

With these rapturous words, she poured the soul of love into his eyes; he forgot everything in the world but her; he dissolved in present happiness and vowed himself hers forever: and she, for her part, bade him but retain her esteem and no woman ever went further in love than she would. She was a true epicure: she had learned that passion, vulgar in itself, is godlike when based upon esteem.

This tender scene was interrupted by the call-boy, who brought Mrs. Woffington a note from the manager, informing her there would be no rehearsal. This left her at liberty, and she proceeded to take a somewhat abrupt leave of Mr. Vane. He was endeavoring to persuade her to let him be her companion until dinner-time (she was to be his guest), when Pomander entered the room.

Mrs. Woffington, however, was not to be persuaded; she excused herself on the score of a duty which she said she had to perform, and whispering as she passed Pomander, "Keep your own counsel," she went out rather precipitately.

Vane looked slightly disappointed.

Sir Charles, who had returned to see whether (as he fully expected) she had told Vane everything, — and who, at that moment, perhaps, would not have been sorry had Mrs. Woffington's lover called him to serious account, — finding it was not her intention to make mischief, and not choosing to publish his own defeat, dropped quietly into his old line, and determined to keep the lovers in sight, and play for revenge. He smiled and said: "My good sir, nobody can hope to monopolize Mrs. Woffington: she has others to do justice to besides you."

To his surprise, Mr. Vane turned instantly round upon him, and, looking him haughtily in the face, said: "Sir Charles Pomander, the settled malignity with which you pursue that lady is unmanly and offensive to me, who love her. Let our acquaintance cease here, if you please, or let her be sacred from your venomous tongue."

Sir Charles bowed stiffly, and replied, that it was only due to himself to withdraw a protection so little appreciated.

The two friends were in the very act of separating forever, when who should run in but Pompey, the renegade. He darted up to Sir Charles, and said: "Massa Pomannah she in a coach, going to 10, Hercules Buildings. I'm in a hurry, Massa Pomannah."

"Where?" cried Pomander. "Say that again.

"10, Hercules Buildings, Lambeth. Me in a hurry, Massa Pomannah."

"Faithful child, there's a guinea for thee. Fly!"

The slave flew, and, taking a short cut, caught and fastened on to the slow vehicle in the Strand.

"It is a house of rendezvous," said Sir Charles, half to himself, half to Mr. Vane. He repeated in triumph: "It is a house of rendezvous." He then, recovering his *sang-froid*, and treating it all as a matter of course, explained that at 10, Hercules Buildings, was a fashionable shop, with entrances from two streets; that the best Indian scarfs and shawls were sold there, and that ladies kept their carriages waiting an immense time in the principal street, whilst they were supposed to be in the shop, or the show-room. He then went on to say that he had only this morning heard that the intimacy between Mrs. Woffington and a Colonel Murthwaite, although publicly broken off for prudential reasons, was still clandestinely carried on. She had, doubtless, slipped away to meet the Colonel.

Mr. Vane turned pale.

"No! I will not suspect. I will

not dog her like a bloodhound," cried he.

"I will!" said Pomander.

"You! By what right?"

"The right of curiosity. I will know whether it is you who are imposed on; or whether you are right, and all the world is deceived in this woman."

He ran out; but, for all his speed, when he got into the street there was the jealous lover at his elbow. They darted with all speed into the Strand; got a coach. Sir Charles, on the box, gave Jehu a guinea, and took the reins, — and by a Niagara of whipcord they attained Lambeth; and at length, to his delight, Pomander saw another coach before him with a gold-laced black slave behind it. The coach stopped; and the slave came to the door. The shop in question was a few hundred yards distant. The adroit Sir Charles not only stopped but turned his coach, and let the horses crawl back towards London; he also flogged the side panels to draw the attention of Mr. Vane. That gentleman looked through the little circular window at the back of the vehicle, and saw a lady paying the coachman. There was no mistaking her figure. This lady, then, followed at a distance by her slave, walked on towards Hercules Buildings; and it was his miserable fate to see her look uneasily round, and at last glide in at a side door, close to the silk-mercer's shop.

The carriage stopped. Sir Charles came himself to the door.

"Now, Vane," said he; "before I consent to go any further in this business, you must promise me to be cool and reasonable. I abhor absurdity; and there must be no swords drawn for this little hypocrite."

"I submit to no dictation," said Vane, white as a sheet.

"You have benefited so far by my knowledge," said the other, politely; "let me, who am self-possessed, claim some influence with you."

"Forgive me!" said poor Vane. "My ang— my sorrow that such an angel should be a monster of deceit." He could say no more.

They walked to the shop.

"How she peeped, this way and that," said Pomander, "sly little Woffy!

"No! on second thoughts," said he, "it is the other street we must reconnoitre; and, if we don't see her there, we will enter the shop, and by dint of this purse we shall soon untie the knot of the Woffington riddle."

Vane leaned heavily on his tormentor.

"I am faint," said he.

"Lean on me, my dear friend," said Sir Charles. "Your weakness will leave you in the next street."

In the next street they discovered — nothing. In the shop, they found — no Mrs. Woffington. They returned to the principal street. Vane began to hope there was no positive evidence. Suddenly three stories up a fiddle was heard. Pomander took no notice, but Vane turned red; this put Sir Charles upon the scent.

"Stay!" said he. "Is not that an Irish tune?"

Vane groaned. He covered his face with his hands, and hissed out: —

"It is her favorite tune."

"Aha!" said Pomander. "Follow me!"

They crept up the stairs, Pomander in advance; they heard the signs of an Irish orgie, — a rattling jig played and danced with the inspiriting interjections of that frolicsome nation. These sounds ceased after a while, and Pomander laid his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I prepare you," said he, "for what you are sure to see. This woman was an Irish bricklayer's daughter, and 'what is bred in the bone never comes out of the flesh'; you will find her sitting on some Irishman's knee, whose limbs are ever so much stouter than yours. You are the man of her head, and this is the man of her heart. These things

would be monstrous, if they were not common; incredible, if we did not see them every day. But this poor fellow, whom probably she deceives as well as you, is not to be sacrificed like a dog to your unjust wrath; he is as superior to her as you are to him."

"I will commit no violence," said Vane. "I still hope she is innocent."

Pomander smiled, and said he hoped so too.

"And if she is what you think, I will but show her she is known, and, blaming myself as much as her, — O yes! more than her! — I will go down this night to Shropshire, and never speak word to her again in this world or the next."

"Good," said Sir Charles.

"'Le bruit est pour le fat, la plainte est pour le sot,
L'honnête homme trompé s'éloigne et ne dit mot.'

Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Then follow me."

Turning the handle gently, he opened the door like lightning, and was in the room. Vane's head peered over his shoulder. She was actually there!

For once in her life, the cautious, artful woman was taken by surprise. She gave a little scream, and turned as red as fire. But Sir Charles surprised somebody else even more than he did poor Mrs. Woffington.

It would be impertinent to tantalize my reader, but I flatter myself this history is not written with power enough to do that, and I may venture to leave him to guess whom Sir Charles Pomander surprised more than he did the actress, while I go back for the lagging sheep.

CHAPTER VIII.

James Triplet, water in his eye, but fire in his heart, went home on wings. Arrived there, he anticipated curiosity by informing all hands he should answer no questions. Only in the intervals of a work, which was to take the family out of all its troubles, he should gradually unfold a tale, verging on the marvellous, — a tale whose only fault was, that fiction, by which alone the family could hope to be great, paled beside it. He then seized some sheets of paper, fished out some old dramatic sketches, and a list of *dramatis personæ*, prepared years ago, and plunged into a comedy. As he wrote, true to his promise, he painted, Triplet-wise, that story which we have coldly related, and made it appear, to all but Mrs. Triplet, that he was under the tutela, or express protection of Mrs. Woffington, who would push his fortunes until the only difficulty would be to keep arrogance out of the family heart.

Mrs. Triplet groaned aloud. "You have brought the picture home, I see," said she.

"Of course I have. She is going to give me a sitting."

"At what hour, of what day?" said Mrs. Triplet, with a world of meaning.

"She did not say," replied Triplet, avoiding his wife's eye.

"I know she did not," was the answer. "I would rather you had brought me the ten shillings than this fine story," said she.

"Wife!" said Triplet, "don't put me into a frame of mind in which successful comedies are not written." He scribbled away; but his wife's despondency told upon the man of disappointments. Then he stuck fast; then he became fidgety.

"Do keep those children quiet!" said the father.

"Hush, my dears," said the mother; "let your father write. Comedy seems to give you more trouble than tragedy, James," added she, soothingly.

"Yes," was his answer. "Sorrow comes somehow more natural to me; but for all that I have got a bright

thought, Mrs. Triplet. Listen, all of you. You see, Jane, they are all at a sumptuous banquet, all the *dramatis personæ*, except the poet."

Triplet went on writing, and reading his work out: "Music, sparkling wine, massive plate, rose-water in the hand-glasses, soup, fish, — shall I have three sorts of fish? I will; they are cheap in this market. Ah! Fortune, you wretch, here at least I am your master, and I'll make you know it, — venison," wrote Triplet, with a malicious grin, "game, pickles, and provocatives in the centre of the table; then up jumps one of the guests, and says he — "

"O dear, I am so hungry."

This was not from the comedy, but from one of the boys.

"And so am I," cried a girl.

"That is an absurd remark, Lysimachus," said Triplet, with a suspicious calmness.

"How can a boy be hungry three hours after breakfast?"

"But, father, there was no breakfast for breakfast."

"Now I ask you, Mrs. Triplet," appealed the author, "how I am to write comic scenes if you let Lysimachus and Roxalana here put the heavy business in every five minutes?"

"Forgive them; the poor things are hungry."

"Then let them be hungry in another room," said the irritated scribe. "They sha' n't cling round my pen, and paralyze it, just when it is going to make all our fortunes; but you women," snapped Triplet the Just, "have no consideration for people's feelings. Send them all to bed; every man Jack of them!"

Finding the conversation taking this turn, the brats raised an unanimous howl.

Triplet darted a fierce glance at them. "Hungry, hungry," cried he; "is that a proper expression to use before a father who is sitting down here, all gayety" (scratching wildly with his pen) "and hilarity" (scratch) "to write a com—com—" he choked a moment; then in a very different voice, all sadness and tenderness, he said: "Where's the youngest, — where's Lucy? As if I did n't know you are hungry."

Lucy came to him directly. He took her on his knee, pressed her gently to his side, and wrote silently. The others were still.

"Father," said Lucy, aged five, the germ of a woman, "I am not tho very hungry."

"And I am not hungry at all," said bluff Lysimachus, taking his sister's cue; then going upon his own tact he added, "I had a great piece of bread and butter yesterday!"

"Wife, they will drive me mad!" and he dashed at the paper.

The second boy explained to his mother, *sotto voce:* "Mother, he *made* us hungry out of his book."

"It is a beautiful book," said Lucy. "Is it a cookery book?"

Triplet roared: "Do you hear that?" inquired he, all trace of ill-humor gone. "Wife," he resumed, after a gallant scribble, "I took that sermon I wrote."

"And beautiful it was, James. I'm sure it quite cheered me up with thinking that we shall all be dead before so very long."

"Well, the reverend gentleman would not have it. He said it was too hard upon sin. 'You run at the Devil like a mad bull,' said he. 'Sell it in Lambeth, sir; *here* calmness and decency are before everything,' says he. 'My congregation expect to go to heaven down hill. Perhaps the chaplain of Newgate might give you a crown for it,' said he," and Triplet dashed viciously at the paper. "Ah!" sighed he, "if my friend Mrs. Woffington would but drop these stupid comedies and take to tragedy, this house would soon be all smiles."

"O James!" replied Mrs. Triplet, almost peevishly, "how can you expect anything but fine words from that woman? You won't believe what all the world says. You will trust to your own good heart."

"I have n't a good heart," said the poor, honest fellow. "I spoke like a brute to you just now."

"Never mind, James," said the woman: "I wonder how you put up with me at all, — a sick, useless creature. I often wish to die, for your sake. I know you would do better. I am such a weight round your neck."

The man made no answer, but he put Lucy gently down, and went to the woman, and took her forehead to his bosom, and held it there; and after a while returned with silent energy to his comedy.

"Play us a tune on the fiddle, father."

"Ay, do, husband. That helps you often in your writing."

Lysimachus brought him the fiddle, and Triplet essayed a merry tune; but it came out so doleful, that he shook his head, and laid the instrument down. Music must be in the heart, or it will come out of the fingers — notes, not music.

"No," said he; "let us be serious and finish this comedy slap off. Perhaps it hitches because I forgot to invoke the comic muse. She must be a black-hearted jade, if she does n't come with merry notions to a poor devil, starving in the midst of his hungry little ones."

"We are past help from heathen goddesses," said the woman. "We must pray to Heaven to look down upon us and our children."

The man looked up with a very bad expression on his countenance.

"You forget," said he, sullenly, "our street is very narrow, and the opposite houses are very high."

"James!"

"How can Heaven be expected to see what honest folk endure in so dark a hole as this?" cried the man, fiercely.

"James," said the woman, with fear and sorrow, "what words are these?"

The man rose, and flung his pen upon the floor.

"Have we given honesty a fair trial, — yes or no?"

"No!" said the woman, without a moment's hesitation; "not till we die, as we have lived. Heaven is higher than the sky; children," said she, lest perchance her husband's words should have harmed their young souls, "the sky is above the earth, and heaven is higher than the sky; and Heaven is just."

"I suppose it is so," said the man, a little cowed by her. "Everybody says so. I think so, at bottom, myself; but I can't see it. I want to see it, but I can't!" cried he, fiercely. "Have my children offended Heaven? They will starve, — they will die! If I was Heaven, I 'd be just, and send an angel to take these children's part. They cried to me for bread, — I had no bread; so I gave them hard words. The moment I had done that, I knew it was all over. God knows it took a long while to break my heart; but it is broken at last; quite, quite broken! broken! broken!"

And the poor thing laid his head upon the table, and sobbed, beyond all power of restraint. The children cried round him, scarce knowing why; and Mrs. Triplet could only say, "My poor husband!" and prayed and wept upon the couch where she lay.

It was at this juncture that a lady, who had knocked gently and unheard, opened the door, and with a light step entered the apartment; but no sooner had she caught sight of Triplet's anguish, than saying hastily, "Stay, I forgot something," she made as hasty an exit.

This gave Triplet a moment to recover himself; and Mrs. Woffington, whose lynx eye had comprehended all at a glance, and who had determined at once what line to take, came flying in again, saying: —

"Was n't somebody inquiring for an angel? Here I am. See, Mr. Triplet"; and she showed him a note, which said: "Madam, you are an

angel. From a perfect stranger," explained she; "so it must be true."

"Mrs. Woffington," said Mr. Triplet to his wife.

Mrs. Woffington planted herself in the middle of the floor, and with a comical glance, setting her arms akimbo, uttered a shrill whistle.

"Now you will see another angel, — there are two sorts of them."

Pompey came in with a basket; she took it from him.

"Lucifer, avaunt!" cried she, in a terrible tone, that drove him to the wall; "and wait outside the door," added she, conversationally.

"I heard you were ill, ma'am, and I have brought you some physic, — black draughts from Burgundy"; and she smiled. And, recovered from their first surprise, young and old began to thaw beneath that witching, irresistible smile. "Mrs. Triplet, I have come to give your husband a sitting; will you allow me to eat my little luncheon with you? I am so hungry." Then she clapped her hands, and in ran Pompey. She sent him for a pie she professed to have fallen in love with at the corner of the street.

"Mother," said Alcibiades, "will the lady give me a bit of her pie?"

"Hush! you rude boy!" cried the mother.

"She is not much of a lady if she does not," cried Mrs. Woffington. "Now, children, first let us look at — ahem — a comedy. Nineteen *dramatis personæ!* What do you say, children, shall we cut out seven, or nine? that is the question. You can't bring your armies into our drawing-rooms, Mr. Dagger-and-bowl. Are you the Marlborough of comedy? Can you marshal battalions on a turkey carpet, and make gentlefolks witty in platoons? What is this in the first act? A duel, and both wounded! You butcher!"

"They are not to die, ma'am!" cried Triplet, deprecatingly; "upon my honor," said he, solemnly, spreading his hands on his bosom.

"Do you think I'll trust their lives with you? No! Give me a pen; this is the way *we* run people through the body." Then she wrote ("business." Araminta looks out of the garret window. Combatants drop their swords, put their hands to their hearts, and stagger off O. P. and P. S.) "Now, children, who helps me to lay the cloth?"

"I!"

"And I!" (The children run to the cupboard.)

Mrs. Triplet (half rising). "Madam, I — can't think of allowing you."

Mrs. Woffington replied: "Sit down, madam, or I must use brute force. If you are ill, be ill — till I make you well. Twelve plates, quick! Twenty-four knives, quicker! Forty-eight forks quickest!" She met the children with the cloth and laid it; then she met them again and laid knives and forks, all at full gallop, which mightily excited the bairns. Pompey came in with the pie, Mrs. Woffington took it and set it before Triplet.

Mrs. Woffington. "Your coat, Mr. Triplet, if you please."

Mr. Triplet. "My coat, madam!"

Mrs. Woffington. "Yes, off with it, — there's a hole in it, — and carve." Then she whipped to the other end of the table and stitched like wildfire. "Be pleased to cast your eyes on that, Mrs. Triplet. Pass it to the lady, young gentleman. Fire away, Mr. Triplet, never mind us women. Woffington's housewife, ma'am, fearful to the eye, only it holds everything in the world, and there is a small space for everything else, — to be returned by the bearer. Thank you, sir." (Stitches away like lightning at the coat.) "Eat away, children! now is your time; when once I begin, the pie will soon end; I do everything so quick."

Roxalana. "The lady sews quicker than you, mother."

Woffington. "Bless the child, don't come so near my sword-arm; the

needle will go into your eye, and out at the back of your head."

This nonsense made the children giggle.

"The needle will be lost, — the child no more, — enter undertaker, — house turned topsy-turvy, — father shows Woffington to the door, — off she goes with a face as long and dismal as some people's comedies, — no names, — crying fine cha-ney oranges."

The children, all but Lucy, screeched with laughter.

Lucy said gravely: —

"Mother, the lady is very funny."

"You will be as funny when you are as well paid for it."

This just hit poor Trip's notion of humor, and he began to choke, with his mouth full of pie.

"James, take care," said Mrs. Triplet, sad and solemn.

James looked up.

"My wife is a good woman, madam," said he; "but deficient in an important particular."

"O James!"

"Yes, my dear. I regret to say you have no sense of humor; nummore than a cat, Jane."

"What! because the poor thing can't laugh at your comedy?"

"No, ma'am; but she laughs at nothing."

"Try her with one of your tragedies, my lad."

"I am sure, James," said the poor, good, lackadaisical woman, "if I don't laugh, it is not for want of the will. I used to be a very hearty laugher," whined she; "but I have n't laughed this two years."

"O, indeed!" said the Woffington. "Then the next two years you shall do nothing else."

"Ah, madam!" said Triplet. "That passes the art, even of the great comedian."

"Does it?" said the actress, coolly.

Lucy. — "She is not a comedy lady. You don't ever cry, pretty lady?"

Woffington (ironically). — "O, of course not."

Lucy (confidentially). — "Comedy is crying. Father cried all the time he was writing his one."

Triplet turned red as fire.

"Hold your tongue," said he: "I was bursting with merriment. Wife, our children talk too much; they put their noses into everything, and criticise their own father."

"Unnatural offspring!" laughed the visitor.

"And when they take up a notion, Socrates could n't convince them to the contrary. For instance, madam, all this morning they thought fit to assume that they were starving.

"So we were," said Lysimachus, "until the angel came; and the devil went for the pie."

"There — there — there! Now, you mark my words; we shall never get that idea out of their heads — "

"Until," said Mrs. Woffington, lumping a huge cut of pie into Roxalana's plate, "we put a very different idea into their stomachs." This and the look she cast on Mrs. Triplet fairly caught that good, though sombre personage. She giggled; put her hand to her face, and said: "I'm sure I ask your pardon, ma'am"

It was no use; the comedian had determined they should all laugh, and they were made to laugh. Then she rose, and showed them how to drink healths *à la Française;* and keen were her little admirers to touch her glass with theirs. And the pure wine she had brought did Mrs. Triplet much good, too; though not so much as the music and sunshine of her face and voice. Then, when their stomachs were full of good food, and the soul of the grape tingled in their veins, and their souls glowed under her great magnetic power, she suddenly seized the fiddle, and showed them another of her enchantments. She put it on her knee, and played a tune that would have made gout, cholic, and phthisic dance upon their last legs. She played to the eye as

well as to the ear, with such a smart gesture of the bow, and such a radiance of face as she looked at them, that whether the music came out of her wooden shell, or her horse-hair wand, or her bright self, seemed doubtful. They pranced on their chairs; they could not keep still. She jumped up; so did they. She gave a wild Irish horroo. She put the fiddle in Triplet's hand.

"The wind that shakes the barley, ye divil!" cried she.

Triplet went *hors de lui;* he played like Paganini, or an intoxicated demon. Woffington covered the buckle in gallant style; she danced, the children danced. Triplet fiddled and danced, and flung his limbs in wild dislocation; the wineglasses danced; and last, Mrs. Triplet was observed to be bobbing about on her sofa, in a monstrous absurd way, droning out the tune, and playing her hands with mild enjoyment, all to herself. Woffington pointed out this pantomimic soliloquy to the two boys, with a glance full of fiery meaning. This was enough: with a fiendish yell, they fell upon her, and tore her, shrieking, off the sofa. And lo! when she was once launched, she danced up to her husband, and set to him with a meek deliberation that was as funny as any part of the scene. So then the mover of all this slipped on one side, and let the stone of merriment roll, — and roll it did; there was no swimming, sprawling, or irrelevant frisking; their feet struck the ground for every note of the fiddle, pat as its echo, their faces shone, their hearts leaped, and their poor frozen natures came out, and warmed themselves at the glowing melody; a great sunbeam had come into their abode, and these human motes danced in it. The elder ones recovered their gravity first, they sat down breathless, and put their hands to their hearts; they looked at one another, and then at the goddess who had revived them. Their first feeling was wonder; were they the same, who, ten minutes ago, were weeping together? Yes! ten minutes ago they were rayless, joyless, hopeless. Now the sun was in their hearts, and sorrow and sighing were fled, as fogs disperse before the god of day. It was magical; could a mortal play upon the soul of man, woman, and child like this? Happy Woffington! and suppose this was more than half acting, but such acting as Triplet never dreamed of; and to tell the honest, simple truth, I myself should not have suspected it; but children are sharper than one would think, and Alcibiades Triplet told, in after years, that, when they were all dancing except the lady, he caught sight of her face, — and it was quite, quite grave, and even sad; but, as often as she saw him look at her, she smiled at him so gayly, — he could n't believe it was the same face.

If it was art, glory be to such art so worthily applied! and honor to such creatures as this, that come like sunshine into poor men's houses, and tune drooping hearts to daylight and hope!

The wonder of these worthy people soon changed to gratitude. Mrs. Woffington stopped their mouths at once.

"No, no!" cried she; "if you really love me, no scenes: I hate them. Tell these brats to kiss me, and let me go. I must sit for my picture after dinner; it is a long way to Bloomsbury Square."

The children needed no bidding; they clustered round her, and poured out their innocent hearts as children only do.

"I shall pray for you after father and mother," said one.

"I shall pray for you after daily bread," said Lucy, "because we were *tho* hungry till you came!"

"My poor children!" cried Woffington, and hard to grown-up actors, as she called us, but sensitive to children, she fairly melted as she embraced them.

It was at this precise juncture that

the door was unceremoniously opened, and the two gentlemen burst upon the scene!

My reader now guesses whom Sir Charles Pomander surprised more than he did Mrs. Woffington. He could not for the life of him comprehend what she was doing, and what was her ulterior object. The *nil admirari* of the fine gentleman deserted him, and he gazed open-mouthed, like the veriest chaw-bacon.

The actress, unable to extricate herself in a moment from the children, stood there like Charity, in New College Chapel, whilst the mother kissed her hand, and the father quietly dropped tears, like some leaden water god in the middle of a fountain.

Vane turned hot and cold by turns, with joy and shame. Pomander's genius came to the aid of their embarrassment.

"Follow my lead," whispered he. "What! Mrs. Woffington here!" cried he; then he advanced business-like to Triplet. "We are aware, sir, of your various talents, and are come to make a demand on them. I, sir, am the unfortunate possessor of frescos; time has impaired their indelicacy, no man can restore it as you can."

"Augh! sir! sir!" said the gratified goose.

"My Cupid's bows are walking-sticks, and my Venus's noses are snubbed. You must set all that straight, on your own terms, Mr. Triplet."

"In a single morning all shall bloom again, sir! Whom would you wish them to resemble in feature? I have lately been praised for my skill in portraiture." (Glancing at Mrs. Woffington.)

"Oh!" said Pomander, carelessly, "you need not go far for Venuses and Cupids, I suppose?"

"I see, sir: my wife and children. Thank you, sir; thank you."

Pomander stared; Mrs. Woffington laughed.

Now it was Vane's turn.

"Let me have a copy of verses from your pen. I shall have five pounds at your disposal for them."

"The world has found me out!" thought Triplet, blinded by his vanity. "The subject, sir?"

"No matter," said Vane, — "no matter."

"O, of course, it does not matter to me," said Triplet, with some *hauteur*, and assuming poetic omnipotence. "Only, when one knows the subject, one can sometimes make the verses apply better."

"Write then, since you are so confident, upon Mrs. Woffington."

"Ah! that is a subject! They shall be ready in an hour!" cried Trip, in whose imagination Parnassus was a raised counter. He had in a teacup some lines on Venus and Mars, which he could not but feel would fit Thalia and Crœsus, or Genius and Envy, equally well. "In one hour, sir," said Triplet, "the article shall be executed, and delivered at your house."

Mrs. Woffington called Vane to her, with an engaging smile. A month ago he would have hoped she would not have penetrated him and Sir Charles; but he knew her better now. He came trembling.

"Look me in the face, Mr. Vane," said she, gently, but firmly.

"I cannot!" said he. "How can I ever look you in the face again?"

"Ah! you disarm me! But I must strike you, or this will never end. Did I not promise that, when you had earned my esteem, I would tell you, — what no mortal knows, — Ernest, my whole story? I delay the confession: it will cost me so many blushes, so many tears! And yet I hope, if you knew all, you would pity and forgive me. Meantime, did I ever tell you a falsehood?"

"O no!"

"Why doubt me then, when I tell you that I hold all your sex cheap but you? Why suspect me of Heav-

en knows what, at the dictation of a heartless, brainless fop, — on the word of a known liar, like the world?"

Black lightning flashed from her glorious eyes, as she administered this royal rebuke. Vane felt what a poor creature he was, and his face showed such burning shame and contrition, that he obtained his pardon without speaking.

"There," said she, kindly, "do not let us torment one another. I forgive you. Let me make you happy, Ernest. Is that a great favor to ask? I can make you happier than your brightest dream of happiness, if you will let yourself be happy."

They rejoined the others; but Vane turned his back on Pomander, and would not look at him.

"Sir Charles," said Mrs. Woffington, gayly; for she scorned to admit the fine gentleman to the rank of a permanent enemy, "you will be of our party, I trust, at dinner?"

"Why, no, madam; I fear I cannot give myself that pleasure to-day." Sir Charles did not choose to swell the triumph. "Mr. Vane, good day!" said he, rather dryly. "Mr. Triplet — madam — your most obedient!" and, self-possessed at top, but at bottom crestfallen, he bowed himself away.

Sir Charles, however, on descending the stair and gaining the street, caught sight of a horseman, riding uncertainly about, and making his horse curvet, to attract attention.

He soon recognized one of his own horses, and upon it the servant he had left behind to dog that poor innocent country lady. The servant sprang off his horse and touched his hat. He informed his master that he had kept with the carriage until ten o'clock this morning, when he had ridden away from it at Barnet, having duly pumped the servants as opportunity offered.

"Who is she?" cried Sir Charles.

"Wife of a Cheshire squire, Sir Charles," was the reply.

"His name? Whither goes she in town?"

"Her name is Mrs. Vane, Sir Charles. She is going to her husband."

"Curious!" cried Sir Charles. "I wish she had no husband. No! I wish she came from Shropshire," and he chuckled at the notion.

"If you please, Sir Charles," said the man, "is not Willoughby in Cheshire?"

"No," cried his master; "it is in Shropshire. What! eh! Five guineas for you if that lady comes from Willoughby in Shropshire."

"That is where she comes from then, Sir Charles, and she is going to Bloomsbury Square."

"How long have they been married?"

"Not more than twelve months, Sir Charles."

Pomander gave the man ten guineas instead of five on the spot.

Reader, it was too true! Mr. Vane — the good, the decent, the churchgoer — Mr. Vane, whom Mrs. Woffington had selected to improve her morals — Mr Vane was a married man!

CHAPTER IX.

As soon as Pomander had drawn his breath and realized this discovery, he darted up stairs, and, with all the demure calmness he could assume, told Mr. Vane, whom he met descending, that he was happy to find his engagements permitted him to join the party in Bloomsbury Square. He then flung himself upon his servant's horse.

Like Iago, he saw the indistinct outline of a glorious and a most malicious plot; it lay crude in his head and heart at present; thus much he saw clearly, that, if he could time Mrs. Vane's arrival so that she should pounce upon the Woffington at her husband's table, he might be present at and enjoy the public discomfiture of a man and woman who had wound-

ed his vanity. Bidding his servant make the best of his way to Bloomsbury Square, Sir Charles galloped in that direction himself, intending first to inquire whether Mrs. Vane was arrived, and, if not, to ride towards Islington and meet her. His plan was frustrated by an accident; galloping round a corner, his horse did not change his leg cleverly, and, the pavement being also loose, slipped and fell on his side, throwing his rider upon the *trottoir*. The horse got up and trembled violently, but was unhurt. The rider lay motionless, except that his legs quivered on the pavement. They took him up and conveyed him into a druggist's shop, the master of which practised chirurgery. He had to be sent for; and, before he could be found, Sir Charles recovered his reason, so much so, that when the chirurgeon approached with his fleam to bleed him, according to the practice of the day, the patient drew his sword, and assured the other he would let out every drop of blood in his body if he touched him.

He of the shorter but more lethal weapon hastily retreated. Sir Charles flung a guinea on the counter, and mounting his horse rode him off rather faster than before this accident.

There was a dead silence!

"I believe that gentleman to be the Devil!" said a thoughtful by-stander. The crowd (it was a century ago) assented *nem. con.*

Sir Charles, arrived in Bloomsbury Square, found that the whole party was assembled. He therefore ordered his servant to parade before the door, and, if he saw Mrs. Vane's carriage enter the Square, to let him know, if possible, before she should reach the house. On entering he learned that Mr. Vane and his guests were in the garden (a very fine one), and joined them there.

Mrs. Vane demands another chapter, in which I will tell the reader who she was, and what excuse her husband had for his *liaison* with Margaret Woffington.

CHAPTER X.

Mabel Chester was the beauty and toast of South Shropshire. She had refused the hand of half the country squires in a circle of some dozen miles, till at last Mr. Vane became her suitor. Besides a handsome face and person, Mr. Vane had accomplishments his rivals did not possess. He read poetry to her on mossy banks an hour before sunset, and awakened sensibilities which her other suitors shocked, and they them.

The lovely Mabel had a taste for beautiful things, without any excess of that severe quality called judgment.

I will explain. If you or I, reader, had read to her in the afternoon, amidst the smell of roses and eglantine, the chirp of the mavis, the hum of bees, the twinkling of butterflies, and the tinkle of distant sheep, something that combined all these sights, and sounds, and smells, — say Milton's musical picture of Eden, P. L., lib. 3, and after that "Triplet on Kew," she would have instantly pronounced in favor of "Eden"; but if *we* had read her "Milton," and Mr. Vane had read her "Triplet," she would have as unhesitatingly preferred "Kew" to "Paradise."

She was a true daughter of Eve; the lady, who, when an angel was telling her and her husband the truths of heaven in heaven's own music, slipped away into the kitchen, because she preferred hearing the story at second-hand, encumbered with digressions, and in mortal but marital accents.

When her mother, who guarded Mabel like a dragon, told her Mr. Vane was not rich enough, and she really must not give him so many opportunities, Mabel cried and embraced the dragon, and said, "O mother!" The dragon, finding her ferocity dissolving, tried to shake her off, but the goose would cry and embrace the dragon till it melted.

By and by Mr. Vane's uncle died

suddenly and left him the great Stoken Church estate, and a trunk full of Jacobuses and Queen Anne's guineas, — his own hoard and his father's, — then the dragon spake comfortably and said: —

"My child, he is now the richest man in Shropshire. He will not think of you now; so steel your heart."

Then Mabel, contrary to all expectations, did not cry; but, with flushing cheek, pledged her life upon Ernest's love and honor. And Ernest, as soon as the funeral, &c., left him free, galloped to Mabel, to talk of our good fortune. The dragon had done him injustice; that was not his weak point. So they were married! and they were very, very happy. But, one month after, the dragon died, and that was their first grief; but they bore it together.

And Vane was not like the other Shropshire squires. His idea of pleasure was something his wife could share. He still rode, walked, and sat with her, and read to her, and composed songs for her, and about her, which she played and sang prettily enough, in her quiet, lady-like way, and in a voice of honey dropping from the comb. Then she kept a keen eye upon him; and, when she discovered what dishes he liked, she superintended those herself; and, observing that he never failed to eat of a certain lemon-pudding the dragon had originated, she always made this pudding herself, and she never told her husband she made it.

The first seven months of their marriage was more like blue sky than brown earth; and if any one had told Mabel that her husband was a mortal, and not an angel, sent to her, that her days and nights might be unmixed, uninterrupted heaven, she could hardly have realized the information.

When a vexatious litigant began to contest the will by which Mr. Vane was Lord of Stoken Church, and Mr. Vane went up to London to concert the proper means of defeating this attack, Mrs. Vane would gladly have compounded by giving the man two or three thousand acres, or the whole estate, if he would n't take less, not to rob her of her husband for a month; but she was docile, as she was amorous; so she cried (out of sight) a week; and let her darling go, with every misgiving a loving heart could have; but one! and that one her own heart told her was impossible.

The month rolled away, — no symptom of a return. For this, Mr. Vane was not, in fact, to blame; but, towards the end of the next month, business became a convenient excuse. When three months had passed, Mrs. Vane became unhappy. She thought he too must feel the separation. She offered to come to him. He answered uncandidly. He urged the length, the fatigue of the journey. She was silenced; but some time later she began to take a new view of his objections. "He is so self-denying," said she. "Dear Ernest, he longs for me: but he thinks it selfish to let me travel so far alone to see him."

Full of this idea, she yielded to her love. She made her preparations, and wrote to him, that, if he did not forbid her peremptorily, he must expect to see her at his breakfast-table in a very few days.

Mr. Vane concluded this was a jest, and did not answer this letter at all.

Mrs. Vane started. She travelled with all speed; but, coming to a halt at ——, she wrote to her husband that she counted on being with him at four of the clock on Thursday.

This letter preceded her arrival by a few hours. It was put into his hand at the same time with a note from Mrs. Woffington, telling him she should be at a rehearsal at Covent Garden. Thinking his wife's letter would keep, he threw it on one side into a sort of a tray; and, after a hurried breakfast, went out of his house to the theatre. He returned, as we are aware, with Mrs. Woffington; and also, at her request, with Mr. Cibber,

for whom they called on their way. He had forgotten his wife's letter, and was entirely occupied with his guests.

Sir Charles Pomander joined them, and found Mr. Colander, the head domestic of the London establishment, cutting with a pair of scissors every flower Mrs. Woffington fancied, that lady having a passion for flowers.

Colander, during his temporary absence from the interior, had appointed James Burdock to keep the house, and receive the two remaining guests, should they arrive.

This James Burdock was a faithful old country servant, who had come up with Mr. Vane, but left his heart at Willoughby. James Burdock had for some time been ruminating, and his conclusion was, that his mistress, Miss Mabel (as by force of habit he called her), was not treated as she deserved.

Burdock had been imported into Mr. Vane's family by Mabel; he had carried her in his arms when she was a child; he had held her upon a donkey when she was a little girl; and when she became a woman, it was he who taught her to stand close to her horse, and give him her foot and spring while he lifted her steadily but strongly into her saddle, and, when there, it was he who had instructed her that a horse was not a machine, that galloping tires it in time, and that galloping it on the hard road hammers it to pieces. "I taught the girl," thought James within himself.

This honest silver-haired old fellow seemed so ridiculous to Colander, the smooth, supercilious Londoner, that he deigned sometimes to converse with James, in order to quiz him. This very morning they had had a conversation.

"Poor Miss Mabel! dear heart. A twelvemonth married, and nigh six months of it a widow, or next door."

"We write to her, James, and entertain her replies, which are at considerable length."

"Ay, but we don't read 'em!" said James, with an uneasy glance at the tray.

"Invariably, at our leisure; meantime we make ourselves happy amongst the wits and the sirens."

"And she do make others happy among the poor and the ailing."

"Which shows," said Colander, superciliously, "the difference of tastes."

Burdock, whose eye had never been off his mistress's handwriting, at last took it up and said: "Master Colander, do if ye please, sir, take this into master's dressing-room, do now?"

Colander looked down on the missive with dilating eye. "Not a bill, James Burdock," said he, reproachfully.

"A bill! bless ye, no. A letter from missus."

No, the dog would not take it in to his master; and poor James, with a sigh, replaced it in the tray.

This James Burdock, then, was left in charge of the hall by Colander, and it so happened that the change was hardly effected, before a hurried knocking came to the street door.

"Ay, ay!" grumbled Burdock, "I thought it would not be long. London for knocking and ringing all day, and ringing and knocking all night." He opened the door reluctantly and suspiciously, and in darted a lady, whose features were concealed by a hood. She glided across the hall, as if she was making for some point, and old James shuffled after her, crying: "Stop, stop! young woman. What is your name, young woman?"

"Why, James Burdock," cried the lady, removing her hood, "have you forgotten your mistress?"

"Mistress! Why, Miss Mabel, I ask your pardon, madam, — here, John, Margery!"

"Hush!" cried Mrs. Vane.

"But where are your trunks, miss? And where's the coach, and Darby and Joan? To think of their drawing you all the way here! I'll

have 'em into your room directly, ma'am. Miss, you 've come just in time."

"What a dear, good, stupid, old thing you are, James. Where is Ernest, — Mr. Vane? James, is he well and happy? I want to surprise him."

"Yes, ma'am," said James, looking down.

"I left the old stupid coach at Islington, James. The something — pin was loose, or I don't know what. Could I wait two hours there? So I came on by myself; you wicked old man, you let me talk, and don't tell me how he is."

"Master is main well, ma'am, and thank you," said old Burdock, confused and uneasy.

"But is he happy? Of course he is. Are we not to meet to-day after six months? Ah! but never mind, they *are* gone by."

"Lord bless her!" thought the faithful old fellow. "If sitting down and crying could help her, I would n't be long."

By this time they were in the banqueting-room, and at the preparations there Mabel gave a start; she then colored. "O, he has invited his friends to make acquaintance. I had rather we had been alone all this day and to-morrow. But he must not know that. No; *his* friends are *my* friends, and shall be too," thought the country wife. She then glanced with some misgiving at her travelling attire, and wished she had brought *one* trunk with her.

"James," said she, "where is my room? And, mind, I forbid you to tell a soul I am come."

"Your room, Miss Mabel?"

"Well, any room where there is looking-glass and water."

She then went to a door which opened in fact on a short passage leading to a room occupied by Mr. Vane himself.

"No, no!" cried James. "That is master's room."

"Well, is not master's room mistress's room, old man? But stay; is he there?"

"No ma'am; he is in the garden, with a power of fine folks."

"They shall not see me till I have made myself a little more decent," said the young beauty, who knew at bottom how little comparatively the color of her dress could affect her appearance, and she opened Mr. Vane's door and glided in.

Burdock's first determination was, in spite of her injunction, to tell Colander; but on reflection he argued: "And then what will they do? They will put their heads together, and deceive us some other way. No!" thought James, with a touch of spite, "we shall see how they will all look." He argued also, that, at sight of his beautiful wife, his master must come to his senses, and the Colander faction be defeated; and perhaps, by the mercy of Providence, Colander himself turned off.

Whilst thus ruminating, a thundering knock at the door almost knocked him off his legs. "There ye go again," said he, and went angrily to the door. This time it was Hunsdon, who was in a desperate hurry to see his master.

"Where is Sir Charles Pomander, my honest fellow?" said he.

"In the garden, my Jack-a-dandy!" said Burdock, furiously.

("Honest fellow," among servants, implies some moral inferiority.)

In the garden went Hunsdon. His master — all whose senses were playing sentinel — saw him, and left the company to meet him.

"She is in the house, sir."

"Good! Go, — vanish!"

Sir Charles looked into the banquet-room; the haunch was being placed on the table. He returned with the information. He burned to bring husband and wife together; he counted each second lost that postponed this (to him) thrilling joy. O, how happy he was! — happier than the serpent, when he saw Eve's white teeth really strike into the apple!

"Shall we pay respect to this haunch, Mr. Quin?" said Vane, gayly.

"If you please, sir," said Quin, gravely.

Colander ran down a by-path with an immense bouquet, which he arranged for Mrs. Woffington in a vase at Mr. Vane's left hand. He then threw open the windows, which were on the French plan, and shut within a foot of the lawn.

The musicians in the arbor struck up, and the company, led by Mr. Vane and Mrs. Woffington, entered the room. And a charming room it was! — light, lofty, and large, — adorned in the French way with white and gold. The table was an exact oval, and at it everybody could hear what any one said; an excellent arrangement where ideaed guests only are admitted, — which is another excellent arrangement, though I see people don't think so.

The repast was luxurious and elegant. There was no profusion of unmeaning dishes; each was a *bonne-bouche*, — an undeniable delicacy. The glass was beautiful, the plates silver: the flowers rose like walls from the table; the plate massive and glorious; rose-water in the hand-glasses; music crept in from the garden, deliciously subdued into what seemed a natural sound. A broad stream of southern sun gushed in fiery gold through the open window, and, like a red-hot rainbow, danced through the stained glass above it. Existence was a thing to bask in, — in such a place, and so happy an hour!

The guests were Quin, Mrs. Clive, Mr. Cibber, Sir Charles Pomander, Mrs. Woffington, and Messrs. Soaper and Snarl, critics of the day. This pair, with wonderful sagacity, had arrived from the street as the haunch came from the kitchen. Good-humor reigned; some cuts passed, but, as the parties professed wit, they gave and took.

Quin carved the haunch, and was happy; Soaper and Snarl eating the same, and drinking Toquay, were mellowed and mitigated into human flesh. Mr. Vane and Mrs. Woffington were happy; he, because his conscience was asleep; and she, because she felt nothing now could shake her hold of him. Sir Charles was in a sort of mental chuckle. His head burned, his bones ached; but he was in a sort of nervous delight.

"Where is she?" thought he. "What will she do? Will she send her maid with a note? How blue he will look! Or will she come herself? She is a country wife; there must be a scene. O, why does n't she come into this room? She must know we are here! is she watching somewhere?" His brain became puzzled, and his senses were sharpened to a point; he was all eye, ear, and expectation; and this was why he was the only one to hear a very slight sound behind the door we have mentioned, and next to perceive a lady's glove lying close to that door. Mabel had dropped it in her retreat. Putting this and that together, he was led to hope and believe she was there, making her toilet, perhaps, and her arrival at present unknown.

"Do you expect no one else?" said he, with feigned carelessness, to Mr. Vane.

"No," said Mr. Vane, with real carelessness.

"It must be so! What fortune!" thought Pomander.

Soaper. "Mr. Cibber looks no older than he did five years ago."

Snarl. "There was no room on his face for a fresh wrinkle."

Soaper. "He! he! Nay, Mr. Snarl: Mr. Cibber is like old port; the more ancient he grows, the more delicious his perfume."

Snarl. "And the crustier he gets."

Clive. "Mr. Vane, you should always separate those two. Snarl, by himself, is just supportable; but, when Soaper paves the way with his hypocritical praise, the pair are too much; they are a two-edged sword."

Woffington. "Wanting nothing but polish and point."

Vane. "Gentlemen, we abandon your neighbor, Mr. Quin, to you."

Quin. "They know better. If they don't keep a civil tongue in their heads, no fat goes from here to them."

Cibber. "Ah, Mr. Vane; this room is delightful; but it makes me sad. I knew this house in Lord Longueville's time; an unrivalled gallant, Peggy. You may just remember him, Sir Charles?"

Pomander (with his eye on a certain door). "Yes, yes; a gouty old fellow."

Cibber fired up. "I wish you may ever be like him. O the beauty, the wit, the *petits-soupers* that used to be here! Longueville was a great creature, Mr. Vane. I have known him entertain a fine lady in this room, while her rival was fretting and fuming on the other side of that door."

"Ah, indeed!" said Sir Charles.

"More shame for him," said Mr. Vane.

Here was luck! Pomander seized this opportunity of turning the conversation to his object. With a malicious twinkle in his eye, he inquired of Mr. Cibber what made him fancy the house had lost its virtue in Mr. Vane's hands.

"Because," said Cibber, peevishly, "you all want the true *savoir faire* nowadays, because there is no *juste milieu*, young gentlemen. The young dogs of the day are all either unprincipled heathen, like yourself, or Amadisses, like our worthy host." The old gentleman's face and manners were like those of a patriarch, regretting the general decay of virtue, not the imaginary diminution of a single vice. He concluded with a sigh, that, "The true *preux des dames* went out with the full periwig; stap my vitals!"

"A bit of fat, Mr. Cibber?" said Quin, whose jokes were not polished.

"Jemmy, thou art a brute," was the reply.

"You refuse, sir?" said Quin, sternly.

"No, sir!" said Cibber, with dignity: "I accept."

Pomander's eye was ever on the door.

"The old are so unjust to the young," said he. "You pretend that the Deluge washed away iniquity, and that a rake is a fossil. What," said he, leaning as it were on every word, "if I bet you a cool hundred, that Vane has a petticoat in that room, and that Mrs. Woffington shall unearth her?"

The malicious dog thought this was the surest way to effect a dramatic exposure: because, if Peggy found Mabel to all appearances concealed, Peggy would scold her, and betray herself.

"Pomander!" cried Vane, in great heat; then, checking himself, he said coolly: "but you all know Pomander."

"None of you," replied that gentleman. "Bring a chair, sir," said he, authoritatively, to a servant; who, of course, obeyed.

Mrs. Clive looked at him, and thought: "There is something in this!"

"It is for the lady," said he, coolly. Then, leaning over the table, he said to Mrs. Woffington, with an impudent affectation of friendly understanding: "I ran her to earth in this house not ten minutes ago. Of course I don't know who she is! But," smacking his lips, "a rustic Amaryllis, breathing all May-buds and Meadowsweet."

"Have her out, Peggy!" shouted Cibber. "I know the run, — there's the covert! Hark, forward! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Vane rose, and, with a sternness that brought the old beau up with a run, he said: "Mr. Cibber, age and infirmity are privileged; but for you, Sir Charles —"

"Don't be angry," interposed Mrs. Woffington, whose terror was lest he should quarrel with so practised a

swordsman. "Don't you see it is a jest! and, as might be expected from poor Sir Charles, a very sorry one."

"A jest!" said Vane, white with rage. "Let it go no further, or it will be earnest!"

Mrs. Woffington placed her hand on his shoulder, and at that touch he instantly yielded, and sat down.

It was at this moment, when Sir Charles found himself for the present baffled, — for he could no longer press his point, and search that room; when the attention of all was drawn to a dispute, which, for a moment, had looked like a quarrel; whilst Mrs. Woffington's hand still lingered, as only a woman's hand can linger in leaving the shoulder of the man she loves; it was at this moment the door opened of its own accord, and a most beautiful woman stood, with a light step, upon the threshold!

Nobody's back was to her, except Mr. Vane's. Every eye, but his, was spell-bound upon her.

Mrs. Woffington withdrew her hand, as if a scorpion had touched her.

A stupor of astonishment fell on them all.

Mr. Vane, seeing the direction of all their eyes, slewed himself round in his chair into a most awkward position, and when he saw the lady, he was utterly dumfounded! But she, as soon as he turned his face her way, glided up to him, with a little half-sigh, half-cry of joy, and, taking him round the neck, kissed him deliciously, while every eye at the table met every other eye in turn. One or two of the men rose; for the lady's beauty was as worthy of homage as her appearing was marvellous.

Mrs. Woffington, too astonished for emotion to take any definite shape, said, in what seemed an ordinary tone: "Who is this lady?"

"I am his wife, madam," said Mabel, in the voice of a skylark, and smiling friendly on the questioner.

"It is my wife!" said Vane, like a speaking-machine; he was scarcely in a conscious state. "It is my wife!" he repeated, mechanically.

The words were no sooner out of Mabel's mouth than two servants, who had never heard of Mrs. Vane before, hastened to place on Mr. Vane's right hand the chair Pomander had provided, a plate and napkin were there in a twinkling, and the wife modestly, but as a matter of course, courtesied low, with an air of welcome to all her guests, and then glided into the seat her servants obsequiously placed for her.

The whole thing did not take half a minute!

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Vane, besides being a rich, was a magnificent man; when his features were in repose their beauty had a wise and stately character. Soaper and Snarl had admired and bitterly envied him. At the present moment no one of his guests envied him, — they began to realize his position. And he, a huge wheel of shame and remorse, began to turn and whir before his eyes. He sat between two European beauties, and, pale and red by turns, shunned the eyes of both, and looked down at his plate in a cold sweat of humiliation, mortification, and shame.

The iron passed through Mrs. Woffington's soul. So! this was a villain too, the greatest villain of all, — a hypocrite! She turned very faint, but she was under an enemy's eye, and under a rival's; the thought drove the blood back from her heart, and with a mighty effort she was Woffington again. Hitherto her *liaison* with Mr. Vane had called up the better part of her nature, and perhaps our reader has been taking her for a good woman; but now all her dregs were stirred to the surface. The mortified actress gulled by a novice, the wronged and insulted woman, had but two thoughts; to defeat her rival, —

to be revenged on her false lover. More than one sharp spasm passed over her features before she could master them, and then she became smiles above, wormwood and red-hot steel below, — all in less than half a minute.

As for the others, looks of keen intelligence passed between them, and they watched with burning interest for the *dénouement*. That interest was stronger than their sense of the comicality of all this (for the humorous view of what passes before our eyes comes upon cool reflection, not often at the time).

Sir Charles, indeed, who had foreseen some of this, wore a demure look, belied by his glittering eye. He offered Cibber snuff, and the two satirical animals grinned over the snuff-box, like a malicious old ape and a mischievous young monkey.

The new-comer was charming; she was above the middle height, of a full, though graceful figure, her abundant, glossy, bright brown hair glittered here and there like gold in the light; she had a snowy brow, eyes of the profoundest blue, a cheek like a peach, and a face beaming candor and goodness; the character of her countenance resembled "the Queen of the May," in Mr. Leslie's famous picture, more than any face of our day I can call to mind.

"You are not angry with me for this silly trick?" said she, with some misgiving. "After all I am only two hours before my time; you know, dearest, I said four in my letter, — did I not?"

Vane stammered. What could he say?

"And you have had three days to prepare you, for I wrote, like a good wife, to ask leave before starting; but he never so much as answered my letter, madam." (This she addressed to Mrs. Woffington, who smiled by main force.)

"Why," stammered Vane, "could you doubt? I — I — "

"No! Silence was consent, was it not? But I beg your pardon, ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will forgive me. It is six months since I saw him — so you understand — I warrant me you did not look for me so soon, ladies?"

"Some of us did not look for you at all, madam," said Mrs. Woffington.

"What, Ernest did not tell you he expected me?"

"No! He told us this banquet was in honor of a lady's first visit to his house, but none of us imagined that lady to be his wife."

Vane began to writhe under that terrible tongue, whose point hitherto had ever been turned away from him.

"He intended to steal a march on us," said Pomander, dryly; "and, with your help, we steal one on him"; and he smiled maliciously on Mrs. Woffington.

"But, madam," said Mr. Quin, "the moment you did arrive, I kept sacred for you a bit of the fat; for which, I am sure, you must be ready. Pass her plate!"

"Not at present, Mr. Quin," said Mr. Vane, hastily. "She is about to retire and change her travelling-dress."

"Yes, dear; but, you forget, I am a stranger to your friends. Will you not introduce me to them first?"

"No, no!" cried Vane, in trepidation. "It is not usual to introduce in the *beau monde*."

"We always introduce ourselves," rejoined Mrs. Woffington; and she rose slowly, with her eye on Vane. He cast a look of abject entreaty on her; but there was no pity in that curling lip and awful eye. He closed his own eyes, and waited for the blow. Sir Charles threw himself back in his chair, and, chuckling, prepared for the explosion. Mrs. Woffington saw him, and cast on him a look of ineffable scorn; and then she held the whole company fluttering a long while. At length: "The Honorable Mrs. Quickly, madam," said she, indicating Mrs. Clive.

This turn took them all by surprise. Pomander bit his lip.

"Sir John Brute —"

"Falstaff," cried Quin; "hang it."

"Sir John Brute Falstaff," resumed Mrs. Woffington. "We call him, for brevity, Brute."

Vane drew a long breath. "Your neighbor is Lord Foppington; a butterfly of some standing, and a little gouty.

"Sir Charles Pomander."

"O," cried Mrs. Vane. "It is the good gentleman who helped us out of the slough, near Huntingdon. Ernest, if it had not been for this gentleman, I should not have had the pleasure of being here now." And she beamed on the good Pomander.

Mr. Vane did not rise and embrace Sir Charles.

"All the company thanks the good Sir Charles," said Cibber, bowing.

"I see it in all their faces," said the good Sir Charles, dryly.

Mrs. Woffington continued: "Mr. Soaper, Mr. Snarl; gentlemen who would butter and slice up their own fathers!"

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Vane, faintly.

"Critics!" And she dropped, as it were, the word dryly, with a sweet smile, into Mabel's plate.

Mrs. Vane was relieved; she had apprehended cannibals. London they had told her was full of curiosities.

"But yourself, madam?"

"I am the Lady Betty Modish; at your service."

A four-inch grin went round the table. The dramatical old rascal, Cibber, began now to look at it as a bit of genteel comedy; and slipped out his note-book under the table. Pomander cursed her ready wit, which had disappointed him of his catastrophe. Vane wrote on a slip of paper: "Pity and respect the innocent!" and passed it to Mrs. Woffington. He could not have done a more superfluous or injudicious thing.

"And now, Ernest," cried Mabel, "for the news from Willoughby."

Vane stopped her in dismay. He felt how many satirical eyes and ears were upon him and his wife. "Pray go and change your dress first, Mabel," cried he, fully determined that on her return she should not find the present party there.

Mrs. Vane cast an imploring look on Mrs. Woffington. "My things are not come," said she. "And, Lady Betty, I had so much to tell him, and to be sent away"; and the deep blue eyes began to fill.

Now Mrs. Woffington was determined that this lady, who she saw was simple, should disgust her husband, by talking twaddle before a band of satirists. So she said warmly: "It is not fair on us. Pray, madam, your budget of country news. Clouted cream so seldom comes to London quite fresh."

"There, you see, Ernest," said the unsuspicious soul. "First, you must know that Gray Gillian is turned out for a brood mare, so old Geroge won't let me ride her; old servants are such tyrants, my lady. And my Barbary hen has laid two eggs; Heaven knows the trouble we had to bring her to it. And Dame Best, that is my husband's old nurse, Mrs. Quickly, has had soup and pudding from the Hall every day; and once she went so far as to say it was n't altogether a bad pudding. She is not a very grateful woman, in a general way, poor thing! I made it with these hands."

Vane writhed.

"Happy pudding!" observed Mr. Cibber.

"Is this mockery, sir?" cried Vane, with a sudden burst of irritation.

"No, sir; it is gallantry," replied Cibber, with perfect coolness.

"Will you hear a little music in the garden?" said Vane to Mrs. Woffington, pooh-poohing his wife's news.

"Not till I hear the end of Dame Bess."

"Best, my lady."

"Dame Best interests *me*, Mr. Vane."

"Ay, and Ernest is very fond of her, too, when he is at home. She is in her nice new cottage, dear; but she misses the draughts that were in her old one, — they were like old friends. 'The only ones I have, I'm thinking,' said the dear cross old thing; and there stood I, on her floor, with a flannel petticoat in both hands, that I had made for her, and ruined my finger. Look else, my Lord Foppington?" She extended a hand the color of cream.

"Permit me, madam?" taking out his glasses, with which he inspected her finger; and gravely announced to the company: "The laceration is, in fact, discernible. May I be permitted, madam," added he, "to kiss this fair hand, which I should never have suspected of having ever made itself half so useful?"

"Ay, my lord!" said she, coloring slightly, "you shall, because you are so old; but I don't say for a young gentleman, unless it was the one that belongs to me; and he does not ask me."

"My dear Mabel; pray remember we are not at Willoughby."

"I see we are not, Ernest." And the dovelike eyes filled brimful; and all her innocent prattle was put an end to.

"What brutes men are," thought Mrs. Woffington. "They are not worthy even of a fool like this."

Mr. Vane once more pressed her to hear a little music in the garden; and this time she consented. Mr. Vane was far from being unmoved by his wife's arrival, and her true affection. But she worried him; he was anxious, above all things, to escape from his present position, and separate the rival queens; and this was the only way he could see to do it. He whispered Mabel, and bade her somewhat peremptorily rest herself for an hour after her journey, and he entered the garden with Mrs. Woffington.

Now the other gentlemen admired Mrs. Vane the most. She was new. She was as lovely, in her way, as Peggy; and it was the young May-morn beauty of the country. They forgave her simplicity, and even her goodness, on account of her beauty; men are not severe judges of beautiful women. They all solicited her to come with them, and be the queen of the garden. But the good wife was obedient. Her lord had told her she was fatigued; so she said she was tired.

"Mr. Vane's garden will lack its sweetest and fairest flower, madam," cried Cibber, "if we leave you here."

"Nay, my lord, there are fairer than I."

"Poor Quin!" cried Kitty Clive; "to have to leave the alderman's walk for the garden-walk."

"All I regret," said the honest glutton, stoutly, "is that I go without carving for Mrs. Vane."

"You are very good, Sir John; I will be more troublesome to you at supper-time."

When they were all gone, she could n't help sighing. It almost seemed as if everybody was kinder to her than he whose kindness alone she valued. "And he must take Lady Betty's hand instead of mine," thought she. "But that is good breeding, I suppose. I wish there was no such thing; we are very happy without it in Shropshire." Then this poor little soul was ashamed of herself, and took herself to task. "Poor Ernest," said she, pitying the wrong-doer, like a woman, "he was not pleased to be so taken by surprise. No wonder; they are so ceremonious in London. How good of him not to be angry!" Then she sighed; her heart had received a damp. His voice seemed changed, and he did not meet her eyes with the look he wore at Willoughby. She looked timidly into the garden. She saw the gay colors of beaux, as well as of belles, — for in these days

broadcloth had not displaced silk and velvet, — glancing and shining among the trees; and she sighed, but, presently brightening up a little, she said: "I will go and see that the coffee is hot and clear, and the chocolate well mixed for them." The poor child wanted to do something to please her husband. Before she could carry out this act of domestic virtue, her attention was drawn to a strife of tongues in the hall. She opened the folding-doors, and there was a fine gentleman obstructing the entrance of a sombre, rusty figure, with a portfolio and a manuscript under each arm.

The fine gentleman was Colander. The seedy personage was the eternal Triplet, come to make hay with his five-foot rule while the sun shone. Colander had opened the door to him, and he had shot into the hall. The major-domo obstructed the farther entrance of such a coat.

"I tell you my master is not at home," remonstrated the major-domo.

"How can you say so," cried Mrs. Vane, in surprise, "when you know he is in the garden?"

"Simpleton!" thought Colander.

"Show the gentleman in."

"Gentleman!" muttered Colander.

Triplet thanked her for her condescension; he would wait for Mr. Vane in the hall. "I came by appointment, madam; this is the only excuse for the importunity you have just witnessed."

Hearing this, Mrs. Vane dismissed Colander to inform his master. Colander bowed loftily, and walked into the servants' hall without deigning to take the last proposition into consideration.

"Come in here, sir," said Mabel; "Mr. Vane will come as soon as he can leave his company." Triplet entered in a series of obsequious jerks. "Sit down and rest you, sir." And Mrs. Vane seated herself at the table, and motioned with her white hand to Triplet to sit beside her.

Triplet bowed, and sat on the edge of a chair, and smirked and dropped his portfolio, and instantly begged Mrs. Vane's pardon; in taking it up, he let fall his manuscript, and was again confused; but in the middle of some superfluous and absurd excuse his eye fell on the haunch; it straightway dilated to an enormous size, and he became suddenly silent and absorbed in contemplation.

"You look sadly tired, sir."

"Why, yes, madam. It is a long way from Lambeth Walk, and it is passing hot, madam." He took his handkerchief out, and was about to wipe his brow, but returned it hastily to his pocket. "I beg your pardon, madam," said Triplet, whose ideas of breeding, though speculative, were severe, "I forgot myself."

Mabel looked at him, and colored, and slightly hesitated. At last she said: "I'll be bound you came in such a hurry you forgot — you must n't be angry with me — to have your dinner first!"

For Triplet looked like an absurd wolf, — all benevolence and starvation!

"What divine intelligence!" thought Trip. "How strange, madam," cried he, "you have hit it! This accounts, at once, for a craving I feel. Now you remind me, I recollect carving for others, I did forget to remember myself. Not that I need have forgot it to-day, madam; but, being used to forget it, I did not remember not to forget it to-day, madam, that was all." And the author of this intelligent account smiled very, very, very absurdly.

She poured him out a glass of wine. He rose and bowed; but peremptorily refused it, with his tongue, — his eye drank it.

"But you must," persisted this hospitable lady.

"But, madam, consider I am not entitled to — Nectar, as I am a man!"

The white hand was filling his plate with partridge pie: "But, madam,

you don't consider how you overwhelm me with your — Ambrosia, as I am a poet!"

"I am sorry Mr. Vane should keep you waiting."

"By no means, madam; it is fortunate, — I mean it procures me the pleasure of" (here articulation became obstructed) "your society, madam Besides, the servants of the Muse are used to waiting. What we are not used to is" (here the white hand filled his glass) "being waited upon by Hebe and the Twelve Graces, whose health I have the honor" — (Deglutition.)

"A poet!" cried Mabel; "oh! I am so glad! Little did I think ever to see a living poet! Dear heart! I should not have known, if you had not told me. Sir, I love poetry!"

"It is in your face, madam." Triplet instantly whipped out his manuscript, put a plate on one corner of it, and a decanter on the other, and begged her opinion of this trifle, composed, said he, "in honor of a lady Mr. Vane entertains to-day."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Vane, and colored with pleasure. How ungrateful she had been! Here was an attention! — For, of course, she never doubted that the verses were in honor of her arrival.

"'Bright being —'"

sang out Triplet.

"Nay, sir," said Mabel; "I think I know the lady, and it would be hardly proper of me —"

"O madam!" said Triplet, solemnly; "strictly correct, madam!" And he spread his hand out over his bosom. "Strictly! — 'Blunderbuss' (my poetical name, madam) never stooped to the taste of the town.

'Bright being, thou —'"

"But you must have another glass of wine first, and a slice of the haunch."

"With alacrity, madam." He laid in a fresh stock of provisions.

Strange it was to see them side by side! *he*, a Don Quixote, with cordage instead of lines in his mahogany face, and clothes hanging upon him; *she*, smooth, duck-like, delicious, and bright as an opening rose fresh with dew!

She watched him kindly, archly, and demurely; and still plied him, country-wise, with every mortal thing on the table.

But the poet was not a boa-constrictor, and even a boa-constrictor has an end. Hunger satisfied, his next strongest feeling, simple vanity, remained to be contented. As the last morsel went in out came: —

"'Bright being, thou whose ra—'"

"No! no!" said she, who fancied herself (and not without reason) the bright being. "Mr. Vane intended them for a surprise."

"As you please, madam"; and the disappointed bore sighed. "But you would have liked them, for the theme inspired me. The kindest, the most generous of women! Don't you agree with me, madam?"

Mabel Vane opened her eyes. "Hardly, sir," laughed she.

"If you knew her as I do."

"I ought to know her better, sir."

"Ay, indeed! Well, madam, now her kindness to me, for instance, — a poor devil like me. The expression, I trust, is not disagreeable to you, madam? If so, forgive me, and consider it withdrawn."

"La, sir! civility is so cheap, if you go to that."

"Civility, ma'am? Why, she has saved me from despair, — from starvation, perhaps."

"Poor thing! Well, indeed, sir, you looked — you looked — what a shame! and you a poet."

"From an epitaph to an epic, madam."

At this moment a figure looked in upon them from the garden, but retreated unobserved. It was Sir Charles Pomander, who had slipped away, with the heartless and malicious intention of exposing the husband to

the wife, and profiting by her indignation and despair. Seeing Triplet, he made an extemporaneous calculation that so infernal a chatterbox could not be ten minutes in her company without telling her everything, and this would serve his turn very well. He therefore postponed his purpose, and strolled away to a short distance.

Triplet justified the Baronet's opinion. Without any sort of sequency he now informed Mrs. Vane that the benevolent lady was to sit to him for her portrait.

Here was a new attention of Ernest's. How good he was, and how wicked and ungrateful she!

"What! are you a painter too?" she inquired.

"From a house front to an historical composition, madam."

"O, what a clever man! And so Ernest commissioned you to paint a portrait?"

"No, madam; for that I am indebted to the lady herself."

"The lady herself?"

"Yes, madam; and I expected to find her here. Will you add to your kindness by informing me whether she has arrived? Or she is gone —"

"Who, sir? (O dear! not my portrait! O Ernest!)"

"Who, madam!" cried Triplet; "why, Mrs. Woffington!"

"She is not here," said Mrs. Vane, who remembered all the names perfectly well. "There is one charming lady among our guests, her face took me in a moment; but she is a titled lady: there is no Mrs. Woffington amongst them."

"Strange!" replied Triplet; "she was to be here; and in fact that is why I expedited these lines in her honor."

"In *her* honor, sir?"

"Yes, madam. Allow me: —

'Bright being, thou whose radiant brow —'"

"No! no! I don't care to hear them now, for I don't know the lady."

"Well, madam, but at least you have seen her act?"

"Act! you don't mean all this is for an actress?"

"*An* actress? *The* actress! And you have never seen her act? What a pleasure you have to come! To see her act is a privilege; but to act with her, as *I* once did! But she does not remember that, nor shall I remind her, madam," said Triplet, sternly. "On that occasion I was hissed, owing to circumstances which, for the credit of our common nature, I suppress."

"What! are you an actor too? You are everything."

"And it was in a farce of my own, madam, which, by the strangest combination of accidents, was damned!"

"A play-writer? O, what clever men there are in the world — in London, at least! He is a play-writer, too. I wonder my husband comes not. Does Mr. Vane — does Mr. Vane admire this actress?" said she, suddenly.

"Mr. Vane, madam, is a gentleman of taste," said he, pompously.

"Well, sir," said the lady, languidly, "she is not here." Triplet took the hint and rose. "Good by," said she, sweetly; "and thank you kindly for your company, Mr. — Mr. —"

"Triplet, madam, — James Triplet, of 10, Hercules Buildings, Lambeth. Occasional verses, odes, epithalamia, elegies, dedications, squibs, impromptus, and hymns executed with spirit, punctuality, and secrecy. Portraits painted, and instruction in declamation, sacred, profane, and dramatic. The card, madam" (and he drew it as doth a theatrical fop his rapier) "of him who, to all these qualifications, adds a prouder still — that of being,

"Madam,

"Your humble, devoted, and grateful servant,

"JAMES TRIPLET."

He bowed in a line from his right shoulder to his left toe, and

moved off. But Triplet could not go all at one time out of such company; he was given to return in real life, he had played this trick so often on the stage. He came back, exuberant with gratitude.

"The fact is, madam," said he, "strange as it may appear to you, a kind hand has not so often been held out to me, that I should forget it, especially when that hand is so fair and gracious. May I be permitted, madam — you will impute it to gratitude rather than audacity — I — I — " (whimper), "madam" (with sudden severity), "I am gone!"

These last words he pronounced with the right arm at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the fingers pointing horizontally. The stage had taught him this grace also. In his day, an actor who had three words to say, such as, "My lord's carriage is waiting," came on the stage with the right arm thus elevated, delivered his message in the tones of a falling dynasty, wheeled like a soldier, and retired with the left arm pointing to the sky, and the right hand extended behind him like a setter's tail.

Left to herself, Mabel was uneasy. "Ernest is so warm-hearted." This was the way she put it even to herself. He admired her acting, and wished to pay her a compliment. "What if I carried him the verses?" She thought she should surely please him by showing she was not the least jealous or doubtful of him. The poor child wanted so to win a kind look from her husband; but, ere she could reach the window, Sir Charles Pomander had entered it.

Now Sir Charles was naturally welcome to Mrs. Vane; for all she knew of him was, that he had helped her on the road to her husband.

Pomander. "What, madam! all alone here as in Shropshire?"

Mabel. "For the moment, sir."

Pomander. "Force of habit: A husband with a wife in Shropshire is so like a bachelor."

Mabel. "Sir!"

Pomander. "And our excellent Ernest is such a favorite!"

Mabel. "No wonder, sir."

Pomander. "Few can so pass from the larva state of country squire to the butterfly nature of beau."

Mabel. "Yes" (sadly), "I find him changed."

Pomander. "Changed! Transformed. He is now the prop of the 'Cocoa-Tree,' the star of Ranelagh, the Lauzun of the green-room."

Mabel. "The green-room! Where is that? You mean kindly, sir; but you make me unhappy."

Pomander. "The green-room, my dear madam, is the bower where houris put off their wings, and goddesses become dowdies; where Lady Macbeth weeps over her lap-dog, dead from repletion; and Belvidera soothes her broken heart with a dozen of oysters: in a word, it is the place where actors and actresses become men and women, and act their own parts with skill, instead of a poet's clumsily."

Mabel. "Actors! actresses! Does Mr. Vane frequent such — "

Pomander. "He has earned in six months a reputation many a fine gentleman would give his ears for. Not a scandalous journal his initials have not figured in; not an actress of reputation gossip has not given him for a conquest."

"How dare you say this to me?" cried Mrs. Vane, with a sudden flash of indignation, and then the tears streamed over her lovely cheeks; and even a Pomander might have forborne to torture her so; but Sir Charles had no mercy.

"You would be sure to learn it," said he; "and with malicious additions. It is better to hear the truth from a friend."

"A friend? He is no friend to a house who calumniates the husband to the wife. Is it the part of a friend to distort dear Ernest's kindliness and gayety into ill morals; to pervert his love of poetry and plays into an unworthy attachment to actors and — oh!" and the tears would come. But

she dried them, for now she hated this man; with all the little power of hatred she had, she detested him. "Do you suppose I did not know Mrs. Woffington was to come to us to-day?" cried she, struggling passionately against her own fears and Sir Charles's innuendoes.

"What!" cried he; "you recognized her? You detected the actress of all work under the airs of Lady Betty Modish?"

"Lady Betty Modish!" cried Mabel: "that good, beautiful face!"

"Ah!" cried Sir Charles, "I see you did not. Well, Lady Betty was Mrs. Woffington!"

"Whom my husband, I know, had invited here to present her with these verses, which I shall take him for her"; and her poor little lip trembled. "Had the visit been in any other character, as you are so base, so cruel as to insinuate, (what have I done to you that you kill me so, you wicked gentleman?) would he have chosen the day of my arrival?"

"Not if he knew you were coming," was the cool reply.

"And he did know, — I wrote to him."

"Indeed!" said Pomander, fairly puzzled.

Mrs. Vane caught sight of her handwriting on the tray, and darted to it, and seized her letter, and said, triumphantly: —

"My last letter, written upon the road, — see!"

Sir Charles took it with surprise, but, turning it in his hand, a cool, satirical smile came to his face. He handed it back, and said, coldly: —

"Read me the passage, madam, on which you argue."

Poor Mrs. Vane turned the letter in her hand, and her eye became instantly glazed; the seal was unbroken! She gave a sharp cry of agony, like a wounded deer. She saw Pomander no longer; she was alone with her great anguish. "I had but my husband and my God in the world," cried she. "My mother is gone. My God, have pity on me! my husband does not love me."

The cold villain was startled at the mighty storm his mean hand had raised. This creature had not only more feeling, but more passion, than a hundred libertines. He muttered some villain's commonplaces; while this unhappy young lady raised her hands to heaven, and sobbed in a way very terrible to any manly heart.

"He is unworthy you," muttered Pomander. "He has forfeited your love: he has left you nothing but revenge. Be comforted. Let me, who have learned already to adore you —"

"So," cried she, turning on him in a moment (for, on some points, woman's instinct is the lightning of wisdom), "this, sir, was your object? I may no longer hold a place in my husband's heart; but I am mistress of his house. Leave it, sir! and never return to it whilst I live."

Sir Charles, again discomfited, bowed reverentially. "Your wish shall ever be respected by me, madam! But here they come. Use the right of a wife. Conceal yourself in that high chair. See, I turn it; so that they cannot see you. At least you will find I have but told you the truth."

"No!" cried Mabel, violently. "I will not spy upon my husband at the dictation of his treacherous friend."

Sir Charles vanished. He was no sooner gone than Mrs. Vane crouched, trembling, and writhing with jealousy, in the large, high-backed chair. She heard her husband and the *soi-disant* Lady Betty Modish enter. During their absence, Mrs. Woffington had doubtless been playing her cards with art; for it appeared that a reconciliation was now taking place. The lady, however, was still cool and distant. It was poor Mabel's fate to hear these words: "You must permit me to go alone, Mr. Vane. I insist upon leaving this house alone."

On this, he whispered to her.

She answered: "You are not justified."

"I can explain all," was his reply. "I am ready to renounce credit, character, all the world for you."

They passed out of the room before the unhappy listener could recover the numbing influence of these deadly words.

But the next moment she started wildly up, and cried as one drowning cries vaguely for help: "Ernest! oh, no — no! you cannot use me so! Ernest — husband! O mother! mother!"

She rose, and would have made for the door, but nature had been too cruelly tried. At the first step she could no longer see anything; and the next moment, swooning dead away, she fell back insensible, with her head and shoulders resting on the chair.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Vane was putting Mrs. Woffington into her chair, when he thought he heard his name cried. He bade that lady a mournful farewell, and stepped back into his own hall. He had no sooner done so, than he heard a voice, the accent of which alarmed him, though he distinguished no word. He hastily crossed the hall, and flew into the banquet-room. Coming rapidly in at the folding-doors he almost fell over his wife, lying insensible, half upon the floor, and half upon the chair. When he saw her pale and motionless, a terrible misgiving seized him; he fell on his knees.

"Mabel, Mabel!" cried he, "my love! my innocent wife! O God! what have I done? Perhaps it is the fatigue, — perhaps she has fainted."

"No, it is not the fatigue!" screamed a voice near him. It was old James Burdock, who, with his white hair streaming, and his eye gleaming with fire, shook his fist in his master's face, — "no, it is not the fatigue, you villain! It is you who have killed her, with your jezebels and harlots, you scoundrel!"

"Send the women here, James, for God's sake!" cried Mr. Vane, not even noticing the insult he had received from a servant. He stamped furiously, and cried for help. The whole household was round her in a moment. They carried her to bed.

The remorse-stricken man, his own knees trembling under him, flew, in an agony of fear and self-reproach, for a doctor!

A doctor?

CHAPTER XIII.

During the garden scene, Mr. Vane had begged Mrs. Woffington to let him accompany her. She peremptorily refused, and said in the same breath she was going to Triplet, in Hercules Buildings, to have her portrait finished.

Had Mr. Vane understood the sex, he would not have interpreted her refusal to the letter; when there was a postscript, the meaning of which was so little enigmatical.

Some three hours after the scene we have described, Mrs. Woffington sat in Triplet's apartment; and Triplet, palette in hand, painted away upon her portrait.

Mrs. Woffington was in that languid state which comes to women after their hearts have received a blow. She felt as if life was ended, and but the dregs of existence remained; but at times a flood of bitterness rolled over her, and she resigned all hope of perfect happiness in this world, — all hope of loving and respecting the same creature; and at these moments she had but one idea, — to use her own power, and bind her lover to her by chains never to be broken; and to close her eyes, and glide down the precipice of the future.

"I think you are master of this

art," said she, very languidly, to Triplet, "you paint so rapidly."

"Yes, madam," said Triplet, gloomily; and painted on. "Confound this shadow!" added he; and painted on.

His soul, too, was clouded. Mrs. Woffington, yawning in his face, had told him she had invited all Mr. Vane's company to come and praise his work; and ever since that he had been *morne et silencieux*.

"You are fortunate," continued Mrs. Woffington, not caring what she said; "it is so difficult to make execution keep pace with conception."

"Yes, ma'am"; and he painted on.

"You are satisfied with it?"

"Anything but, ma'am"; and he painted on.

"Cheerful soul! — then I presume it is like?"

"Not a bit, ma'am"; and he painted on.

Mrs. Woffington stretched.

"You can't yawn, ma'am, — you can't yawn."

"O yes, I can. You are such good company"; and she stretched again.

"I was just about to catch the turn of the lip," remonstrated Triplet.

"Well, catch it, — it won't run away."

"I'll try, ma'am. A pleasant half-hour it will be for me, when they all come here like cits at a shilling ordinary, — each for his cut."

"At a sensitive goose!"

"That is as may be, madam. Those critics flay us alive!"

"You should not hold so many doors open to censure."

"No, ma'am. Head a little more that way. I suppose you *can't* sit quiet, ma'am? — then never mind!" (This resignation was intended as a stinging reproach.) "Mr. Cibber, with his sneering snuff-box! Mr. Quin, with his humorous bludgeon! Mrs. Clive, with her tongue! Mr. Snarl, with his abuse! And Mr. Soaper, with his praise! — arsenic in treacle I call it! But there, I deserve it all! For look on this picture, and on this!"

"Meaning, I am painted as well as my picture!"

"O no, no, no! But to turn from your face, madam, — on which the lightning of expression plays continually, — to this stony, detestable, dead daub! — I could — And I will, too! Imposture! dead caricature of life and beauty, take that!" and he dashed his palette-knife through the canvas. "Libellous lie against nature and Mrs. Woffington, take that!" and he stabbed the canvas again; then, with sudden humility: "I beg your pardon, ma'am," said he, "for this apparent outrage, which I trust you will set down to the excitement attendant upon failure. The fact is, I am an incapable ass, and no painter! Others have often hinted as much; but I never observed it myself till now!"

"Right through my pet dimple!" said Mrs. Woffington, with perfect *nonchalance*. "Well, now I suppose I may yawn, or do what I like?"

"You may, madam," said Triplet, gravely. "I have forfeited what little control I had over you, madam."

So they sat opposite each other, in mournful silence. At length the actress suddenly rose. She struggled fiercely against her depression, and vowed that melancholy should not benumb her spirits and her power.

"He ought to have been here by this time," said she to herself. "Well, I will not mope for him: I must do something. Triplet," said she.

"Madam."

"Nothing."

"No, madam."

She sat gently down again, and leaned her head on her hand, and thought. She was beautiful as she thought! — her body seemed bristling with mind! At last, her thoughtful gravity was illumined by a smile: she had thought out something *excogitaverat.*

"Triplet, the picture is quite ruined!"

"Yes, madam. And a coach-load of criticism coming!"

"Triplet, we actors and actresses have often bright ideas."

"Yes, ma'am."

"When we take other people's!"

"He, he!" went Triplet. "Those are our best, madam!"

"Well, sir, I have got a bright idea."

"You don't say so, ma'am!"

"Don't be a brute, dear!" said the lady, gravely.

Triplet stared!

"When I was in France, taking lessons of Dumesnil, one of the actors of the Théâtre Français had his portrait painted by a rising artist. The others were to come and see it. They determined, beforehand, to mortify the painter and the sitter, by abusing the work in good set terms. But somehow this got wind, and the patients resolved to be the physicians. They put their heads together, and contrived that the living face should be in the canvas, surrounded by the accessories: these, of course, were painted. Enter the actors, who played their little prearranged farce; and, when they had each given the picture a slap, the picture rose and laughed in their faces, and discomfited them! By the by, the painter did not stop there: he was not content with a short laugh, he laughed at them five hundred years!"

"Good gracious, Mrs. Woffington!"

"He painted a picture of the whole thing; and as his work is immortal, ours an April snow-flake, he has got tremendously the better of those rash little satirists. Well, Trip, what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose; so give me the sharpest knife in the house."

Triplet gave her a knife, and looked confused, while she cut away the face of the picture, and by dint of scraping, cutting, and measuring, got her face two parts through the canvas. She then made him take his brush and paint all round her face, so that the transition might not be too abrupt. Several yards of green baize were also produced. This was to be disposed behind the easel, so as to conceal her.

Triplet painted here, and touched and retouched there. Whilst thus occupied, he said, in his calm, resigned way: "It won't do, madam. I suppose you know that?"

"I know nothing," was the reply. "Life is a guess. I don't think we could deceive Roxalana and Lucy this way, because their eyes are without colored spectacles; but, when people have once begun to see by prejudices and judge by jargon, what can't be done with them? Who knows? do you? I don't; so let us try."

"I beg your pardon, madam; my brush touched your face."

"No offence, sir; I am used to that. And I beg, if you can't tone the rest of the picture up to me, that you will instantly tone me down to the rest. Let us be in tune, whatever it costs, sir."

"I will avail myself of the privilege, madam, but sparingly. Failure, which is certain, madam, will cover us with disgrace."

"Nothing is certain in this life, sir, except that you are a goose. It succeeded in France; and England can match all Europe for fools. Besides, it will be well done. They say Davy Garrick can turn his eyes into bottled gooseberries. Well, Peg Woffington will turn hers into black currants. Haven't you done? I wonder they have not come. Make haste!"

"They will know by its beauty I never did it."

"That is a sensible remark, Trip. But I think they will rather argue backwards; that, as you did it, it cannot be beautiful, and so cannot be me. Your reputation will be our shield.

"Well, madam, now you mention it, they are like enough to take that ground. They despise all I do; if they did not —"

"You would despise them."

At this moment the pair were startled by the sound of a coach. Triplet turned as pale as ashes. Mrs. Woffington had her misgivings; but, not choosing to increase the difficulty, she would not let Triplet, whose self-possession she doubted, see any sign of emotion in her.

"Lock the door," said she, firmly, "and don't be silly. Now hold up my green baize petticoat, and let me be in a half-light. Now put that table and those chairs before me, so that they can't come right up to me; and, Triplet, don't let them come within six yards, if you can help it. Say it is unfinished, and so must be seen from a focus."

"A focus! I don't know what you mean."

"No more do I; no more will they, perhaps; and, if they don't, they will swallow it directly. Unlock the door: are they coming?"

"They are only at the first stair."

"Mr. Triplet, your face is a book, where one may read strange matters. For Heaven's sake, compose yourself: let all the risk lie in one countenance. Look at me, sir. Make your face like the Book of Daniel in a Jew's back parlor. Volto Sciolto is your cue."

"Madam, madam, how your tongue goes! I hear them on the stairs: pray don't speak!"

"Do you know what we are going to do?" continued the tormenting Peggy. "We are going to weigh goose's feathers! to criticise criticism, Trip—"

"Hush! hush!"

A grampus was heard outside the door, and Triplet opened it. There was Quin leading the band.

"Have a care, sir," cried Triplet; "there is a hiatus the third step from the door."

"A *gradus ad Parnassum* a wanting," said Mr. Cibber.

Triplet's heart sank. The hole had been there six months, and he had found nothing witty to say about it, and at first sight Mr. Cibber had done its business. And on such men he and his portrait were to attempt a preposterous delusion. Then there was Snarl, who wrote critiques on painting, and guided the national taste. The unlucky exhibitor was in a cold sweat. He led the way like a thief going to the gallows.

"The picture being unfinished, gentlemen," said he, "must, if you would do me justice, be seen from a — a focus: must be judged from here, I mean."

"Where, sir?" said Mr. Cibber.

"About here, sir, if you please," said poor Triplet, faintly.

"It looks like a finished picture from here," said Mrs. Clive.

"Yes, madam," groaned Triplet.

They all took up a position, and Triplet timidly raised his eyes along with the rest: he was a little surprised. The actress had flattened her face! She had done all that could be done, and more than he had conceived possible, in the way of extracting life and the atmosphere of expression from her countenance. She was "dead still!"

There was a pause.

Triplet fluttered. At last some of them spoke as follows:—

Soaper. "Ah!"

Quin. "Ho!"

Clive. "Eh!"

Cibber. "Humph!"

These interjections are small on paper, but as the good creatures uttered them they were eloquent; there was a cheerful variety of dispraise skilfully thrown into each of them.

"Well," continued Soaper, with his everlasting smile.

Then the fun began.

"May I be permitted to ask whose portrait this is?" said Mr. Cibber, slyly.

"I distinctly told you, it was to be Peg Woffington's," said Mrs. Clive. "I think you might take my word."

"Do you act as truly as you paint?" said Quin.

"Your fame runs no risk from me, sir!" replied Triplet.

"It is not like Peggy's beauty! Eh?" rejoined Quin.

"I can't agree with you," cried Kitty Clive. "I think it a very pretty face; and not at all like Peg Woffington's."

"Compare paint with paint," said Quin. "Are you sure you ever saw down to Peggy's real face?"

Triplet had seen with alarm that Mr. Snarl spoke not; many satirical expressions crossed his face, but he said nothing. Triplet gathered from this that he had at once detected the trick. "Ah!" thought Triplet, "he means to quiz them, as well as expose me. He is hanging back; and, in point of fact, a mighty satirist like Snarl would naturally choose to quiz six people rather than two."

"Now I call it beautiful!" said the traitor Soaper. "So calm and reposeful; no particular expression."

"None whatever," said Snarl.

"Gentlemen," said Triplet, "does it never occur to you that the fine arts are tender violets, and cannot blow when the north winds —"

"Blow!" inserted Quin.

"Are so cursed cutting?" continued Triplet.

"My good sir, I am never cutting!" smirked Soaper. "My dear Snarl," whined he, "give us the benefit of your practised judgment. Do justice to this ad-mirable work of art," drawled the traitor.

"I will!" said Mr. Snarl; and placed himself before the picture.

"What on earth will he say?" thought Triplet. "I can see by his face, he has found us out."

Mr. Snarl delivered a short critique. Mr. Snarl's intelligence was not confined to his phrases; all critics use intelligent phrases and philosophical truths. But this gentleman's manner was very intelligent; it was pleasant, quiet, assured, and very convincing. Had the reader or I been there, he would have carried us with him, as he did his hearers; and as his successors carry the public with them now.

"Your brush is by no means destitute of talent, Mr. Triplet," said Mr. Snarl. "But you are somewhat deficient, at present, in the great principles of your art; the first of which is a loyal adherence to truth. Beauty itself is but one of the forms of truth, and nature is our finite exponent of infinite truth."

His auditors gave him a marked attention. They could not but acknowledge, that men who go to the bottom of things like this should be the best instructors.

"Now, in nature, a woman's face at this distance — ay, even at this short distance — melts into the air. There is none of that sharpness; but, on the contrary, a softness of outline." He made a lorgnette of his two hands; the others did so too, and found they saw much better — oh, ever so much better! "Whereas yours," resumed Snarl, "is hard; and, forgive me, rather tea-board like. Then your *chiaro scuro*, my good sir, is very defective; for instance, in nature, the nose, intercepting the light on one side the face, throws, of necessity, a shadow under the eye. Caravaggio, Venetians generally, and the Bolognese masters, do particular justice to this. No such shade appears in this portrait."

"'T is so, stop my vitals!" observed Colley Cibber. And they all looked, and, having looked, wagged their heads in assent, — as the fat, white lords at Christie's waggle fifty pounds more out for a copy of Rembrandt, a brown levitical Dutchman, visible in the pitch-dark by some sleight of sun Newton had not wit to discover.

Soaper dissented from the mass.

"But, my dear Snarl, if there are no shades, there are lights, loads of lights."

"There are," replied Snarl; "only they are impossible, that is all. You have, however," concluded he, with a manner slightly supercilious, "suc-

ceeded in the mechanical parts; the hair and the dress are well, Mr. Triplet; but *your* Woffington is not a woman, nor nature."

They all nodded and waggled assent; but this sagacious motion was arrested as by an earthquake.

The picture rang out, in the voice of a clarion, an answer that outlived the speaker: "She 's a woman! for she has taken four men in! She 's nature! for a fluent dunce does n't know her when he sees her!"

Imagine the tableau! It was charming! Such opening of eyes and mouths! Cibber fell by second nature into an attitude of the old comedy. And all were rooted where they stood, with surprise and incipient mortification, except Quin, who slapped his knee, and took the trick at its value.

Peg Woffington slipped out of the green baize, and, coming round from the back of the late picture, stood in person before them; while they looked alternately at her and at the hole in the canvas. She then came at each of them in turn, *more dramatico*.

"A pretty face, and not like Woffington. I owe you two, Kate Clive."

"Who ever saw Peggy's real face? Look at it now if you can without blushing, Mr. Quin."

Quin, a good-humored fellow, took the wisest view of his predicament, and burst into a hearty laugh.

"For all this," said Mr Snarl, peevishly, "I maintain, upon the unalterable principles of art —" At this they all burst into a roar, not sorry to shift the ridicule. "Goths!" cried Snarl, fiercely. "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen," cried Mr. Snarl, *avec intention*, "I have a criticism to write of last night's performance." The laugh died away to a quaver. "I shall sit on your pictures one day, Mr. Brush."

"Don't sit on them with your head downwards, or you 'll addle them," said Mr. Brush, fiercely. This was the first time Triplet had ever answered a foe. Mrs. Woffington gave him an eloquent glance of encouragement. He nodded his head in infantine exultation at what he had done.

"Come, Soaper," said Mr. Snarl.

Mr. Soaper lingered one moment to say: "You shall always have my good word, Mr. Triplet."

"I will try — and not deserve it, Mr. Soaper," was the prompt reply.

"Serve 'em right," said Mr. Cibber, as soon as the door had closed upon them; "for a couple of serpents, or rather one boa-constrictor. Soaper slavers, for Snarl to crush. But we were all a little too hard on Triplet here; and, if he will accept my apology —"

"Why, sir," said Triplet, half trembling, but driven on by looks from Mrs. Woffington, "'Cibber's Apology' is found to be a trifle wearisome."

"Confound his impertinence!" cried the astounded laureate. "Come along, Jemmy."

"O sir," said Quin, good-humoredly, "we must give a joke and take a joke. And when he paints my portrait, — which he shall do —"

"The bear from Hockley Hole shall sit for the head!"

"Curse his impudence!" roared Quin. "I'm at your service, Mr. Cibber," added he, in huge dudgeon.

Away went the two old boys.

"Mighty well!" said waspish Mrs. Clive. "I did intend you should have painted Mrs. Clive. But after this impertinence —"

"You will continue to do it yourself, ma'am!"

This was Triplet's hour of triumph. His exultation was undignified, and such as is said to precede a fall. He inquired gravely of Mrs. Woffington, whether he had or had not shown a spirit. Whether he had or had not fired into each a parting shot, as they sheered off. To repair which, it might be advisable for them to put into friendly ports.

"Tremendous!" was the reply.

"And when Snarl and Soaper sit on your next play, they won't forget the lesson you have given them."

"I'll be sworn they won't!" chuckled Triplet. But, reconsidering her words, he looked blank, and muttered: "Then perhaps it would have been more prudent to let them alone!"

"Incalculably more prudent!" was the reply.

"Then why did you set me on, madam?" said Triplet, reproachfully.

"Because I wanted amusement, and my head ached," was the cool answer, somewhat languidly given.

"I defy the coxcombs!" cried Triplet, with reviving spirit. "But real criticism I respect, honor, and bow to. Such as yours, madam; or such as that sweet lady's at Mr. Vane's would have been; or, in fact, anybody's who appreciates me. O madam, I wanted to ask you, was it not strange your not being at Mr. Vane's, after all, to-day?"

"I was at Mr. Vane's, Triplet."

"You were? Why, I came with my verses, and she said you were not there! I will go fetch the verses."

"No, no! Who said I was not there?"

"Did I not tell you? The charming young lady who helped me with her own hand to everything on the table. What wine that gentleman possesses!"

"Was it a young lady, Triplet?"

"Not more than two-and-twenty, I should say."

"In a travelling-dress?"

"I could not see her dress, madam, for her beauty, — brown hair, blue eyes, charming in conversation —"

"Ah! What did she tell you?"

"She told me, madam — Ahem!"

"Well, what did you tell her? And what did she answer?"

"I told her that I came with verses for you, ordered by Mr. Vane. That he admired you. I descanted, madam, on your virtues, which had made him your slave."

"Go on," said Mrs. Woffington, encouraging him with a deceitful smile. "Tell me all you told her."

"That you were sitting to me for your portrait, the destination of which was not doubtful. That I lived at 10, Hercules Buildings."

"You told that lady all this?"

"I give my honor. She was so kind, I opened my heart to her. But tell me now, madam," said Triplet, joyously dancing round the Woffington volcano, "do you know this charming lady?"

"Yes."

"I congratulate you, madam. An acquaintance worthy even of you; and there are not many such. Who is she, madam?" continued Triplet, lively with curiosity.

"Mrs. Vane," was the quiet, grim answer.

"Mrs. Vane? His mother? No — am I mad? His sister! O, I see, his —"

"His wife!"

"His wife! Why, then Mr. Vane's married?"

"Yes."

"O, look there! — O, look here now! Well, but, good Heavens! she was n't to know you were there, perhaps?"

"No."

"But then I let the cat out of the bag?"

"Yes."

"But, good gracious! there will be some serious mischief!"

"No doubt of it."

"And it is all my fault?"

"Yes."

"I've played the deuce with their married happiness?"

"Probably."

"And ten to one if you are not incensed against me too?"

Mrs. Woffington replied by looking him in the face, and turning her back upon him. She walked hastily to the window, threw it open, and looked out of it, leaving poor Triplet to very unpleasant reflections. She was so angry with him she dared not trust herself to speak.

"Just my luck," thought he. "I had a patron and a benefactress; I have betrayed them both." Suddenly an idea struck him. "Madam," said he, timorously, "see what these fine gentlemen are! What business had he, with a wife at home, to come and fall in love with you? I do it forever in my plays — I am obliged — they would be so dull else; but in *real* life to do it is abominable."

"You forget, sir," replied Mrs. Woffington, without moving, "that I am an actress, — a plaything for the impertinence of puppies and the treachery of hypocrites. Fool! to think there was an honest man in the world, and that he had shone on me!"

With these words she turned, and Triplet was shocked to see the change in her face. She was pale, and her black, lowering brows were gloomy and terrible. She walked like a tigress to and fro, and Triplet dared not speak to her: indeed she seemed but half conscious of his presence. He went for nobody with her. How little we know the people we eat and go to church and flirt with! Triplet had imagined this creature an incarnation of gayety, a sportive being, the daughter of smiles, the bride of mirth; needed but a look at her now to see that her heart was a volcano, her bosom a boiling gulf of fiery lava. She walked like some wild creature; she flung her hands up to heaven with a passionate despair, before which the feeble spirit of her companion shrank and cowered; and, with quivering lips and blazing eyes, she burst into a torrent of passionate bitterness.

"But who is Margaret Woffington," she cried, "that she should pretend to honest love, or feel insulted by the proffer of a stolen regard? And what have we to do with homes, or hearts, or firesides? Have we not the playhouse, its paste diamonds, its paste feelings, and the loud applause of fops and sots — hearts? — beneath loads of tinsel and paint? Nonsense! The love that can go with souls to heaven, — such love for us? Nonsense! These men applaud us, cajole us, swear to us, flatter us; and yet, forsooth, we would have them respect us too."

"My dear benefactress," said Triplet, "they are not worthy of you."

"I thought this man was not all dross; from the first I never felt his passion an insult. O Triplet! I could have loved this man, — really loved him! and I longed so to be good. O God! O God!"

"Thank Heaven, you don't love him!" cried Triplet, hastily. "Thank Heaven for that!"

"Love him? Love a man who comes to me with a silly second-hand affection from his insipid baby-face, and offers me half, or two thirds, or a third of his worthless heart? I hate him! — and her! — and all the world!"

"That is what I call a very proper feeling," said poor Triplet, with a weak attempt to soothe her. "Then break with him at once, and all will be well."

"Break with him? Are you mad? No! Since he plays with the tools of my trade I shall fool him worse than he has me. I will feed his passion full, tempt him, torture him, play with him, as the angler plays a fish upon his hook. And, when his very life depends on me, then by degrees he shall see me cool, and cool, and freeze into bitter aversion. Then he shall rue the hour he fought with the Devil against my soul, and played false with a brain and heart like mine!"

"But his poor wife? You will have pity on her?"

"His wife! Are wives' hearts the only hearts that throb, and burn, and break? His wife must defend herself. It is not from me that mercy can come to her, nor from her to me. I loathe her, and I shall not forget that you took her part. Only, if you are her friend, take my advice, don't you assist her. I shall defeat her without that. Let her fight *her* battle, and *I* mine."

"Ah, madam! she cannot fight; she is a dove."

"You are a fool! What do you know about women? You were with her five minutes, and she turned you inside out. My life on it, whilst I have been fooling my time here, she is in the field, with all the arts of our sex, simplicity at the head of them."

Triplet was making a futile endeavor to convert her to his view of her rival, when a knock suddenly came to his door. A slovenly girl, one of his own neighbors, brought him a bit of paper, with a line written in pencil.

"'T is from a lady, who waits below," said the girl.

Mrs. Woffington went again to the window, and there she saw getting out of a coach, and attended by James Burdock, Mabel Vane, who had sent up her name on the back of an old letter.

"What shall I do?" said Triplet, as soon as he recovered the first stunning effects of this *contretemps*. To his astonishment, Mrs. Woffington bade the girl show the lady up stairs. The girl went down on this errand.

"But *you* are here," remonstrated Triplet. "O, to be sure, you can go into the other room. There is plenty of time to avoid her," said Triplet, in a very natural tremor. "This way, madam!"

Mrs. Woffington stood in the middle of the room like a statue.

"What does she come here for?" said she, sternly. "You have not told me all."

"I don't know," cried poor Triplet, in dismay; "and I think the Devil brings her here to confound me. For Heaven's sake, retire! What will become of us all? There will be murder, I know there will!"

To his horror, Mrs. Woffington would not move. "You are on her side," said she, slowly, with a concentration of spite and suspicion. She looked frightful at this moment. "All the better for me," added she, with a world of female malignity.

Triplet could not make head against this blow; he gasped, and pointed piteously to the inner door. "No; I will know two things: the course she means to take, and the terms you two are upon."

By this time Mrs. Vane's light foot was heard on the stair, and Triplet sank into a chair. "They will tear one another to pieces," said he.

A tap came to the door.

He looked fearfully round for the woman whom jealousy had so speedily turned from an angel to a fiend; and saw with dismay that she had actually had the hardihood to slip round and enter the picture again. She had not quite arranged herself when her rival knocked.

Triplet dragged himself to the door. Before he opened it, he looked fearfully over his shoulder, and received a glance of cool, bitter, deadly hostility, that boded ill both for him and his visitor. Triplet's apprehensions were not unreasonable. His benefactress and this sweet lady were rivals!

Jealousy is a dreadful passion, it makes us tigers. The jealous always thirst for blood. At any moment when reason is a little weaker than usual, they are ready to kill the thing they hate, or the thing they love.

Any open collision between these ladies would scatter ill consequences all round. Under such circumstances, we are pretty sure to say or do something wicked, silly, or unreasonable. But what tortured Triplet more than anything was his own particular notion that fate doomed him to witness a formal encounter between these two women, and of course an encounter of such a nature as we in our day illustrate by "Kilkenny cats."

To be sure Mrs. Vane had appeared a dove, but doves can peck on certain occasions, and no doubt she had a spirit at bottom. Her coming to him proved it. And had not the other

been a dove all the morning and afternoon? Yet jealousy had turned her to a fiend before his eyes. Then if (which was not probable) no collision took place, what a situation was his! Mrs. Woffington, (his buckler from starvation) suspected him, and would distort every word that came from Mrs. Vane's lips.

Triplet's situation was, in fact, that of Æneas in the storm.

> "Olim et hæc meminisse juvabit —"
> "But, while present, such things don't please any one a bit."

It was the sort of situation we can laugh at, and see the fun of it six months after, if not shipwrecked on it at the time.

With a ghastly smile the poor quaking hypocrite welcomed Mrs. Vane, and professed a world of innocent delight that she had so honored his humble roof.

She interrupted his compliments, and begged him to see whether she was followed by a gentleman in a cloak.

Triplet looked out of the window.

"Sir Charles Pomander!" gasped he.

Sir Charles was at the very door. If, however, he had intended to mount the stairs he changed his mind, for he suddenly went off round the corner with a business-like air, real or fictitious.

"He is gone, madam," said Triplet.

Mrs. Vane, the better to escape detection or observation, wore a thick mantle and a hood, that concealed her features. Of these Triplet debarrassed her.

"Sit down, madam"; and he hastily drew a chair so that her back was to the picture.

She was pale, and trembled a little. She hid her face in her hands a moment, then, recovering her courage, "she begged Mr. Triplet to pardon her for coming to him. He had inspired her with confidence," she said; "he had offered her his services, and so she had come to him, for she had no other friend to aid her in her sore distress." She might have added, that with the tact of her sex she had read Triplet to the bottom, and came to him, as she would to a benevolent, muscular old woman.

Triplet's natural impulse was to repeat most warmly his offers of service. He did so; and then, conscious of the picture, had a misgiving.

"Dear Mr. Triplet," began Mrs. Vane, "you know this person, Mrs. Woffington?"

"Yes, madam," replied Triplet, lowering his eyes, "I am honored by her acquaintance."

"You will take me to the theatre where she acts?"

"Yes, madam: to the boxes, I presume?"

"No! O no! How could I bear that? To the place where the actors and actresses are."

Triplet demurred. This would be courting that very collision, the dread of which even now oppressed him.

At the first faint sign of resistance she began to supplicate him, as if he was some great, stern tyrant.

"O, you must not, you cannot refuse me. You do not know what I risk to obtain this. I have risen from my bed to come to you. I have a fire here!" She pressed her hand to her brow. "O, take me to her!"

"Madam, I will do anything for you. But be advised; trust to my knowledge of human nature. What you require is madness. Gracious Heavens! you two are rivals, and when rivals meet there's murder or deadly mischief."

"Ah! if you knew my sorrow, you would not thwart me. O Mr. Triplet! little did I think you were as cruel as the rest." So then this cruel monster whimpered out that he should do any folly she insisted upon. "Good, kind Mr. Triplet!" said Mrs. Vane. "Let me look in your face? Yes, I see you are honest and true. I will tell you all." Then she poured in his ear her simple tale, unadorned

and touching as Judah's speech to Joseph. She told him how she loved her husband; how he had loved her; how happy they were for the first six months; how her heart sank when he left her; how he had promised she should join him, and on that hope she lived. "But for two months he had ceased to speak of this, and I grew heart-sick waiting for the summons that never came. At last I felt I should die if I did not see him; so I plucked up courage and wrote that I must come to him. He did not forbid me, so I left our country home. O sir! I cannot make you know how my heart burned to be by his side. I counted the hours of the journey; I counted the miles. At last I reached his house; I found a gay company there. I was a little sorry, but I said: 'His friends shall be welcome, right welcome. He has asked them to welcome his wife.'"

"Poor thing!" muttered Triplet.

"O Mr. Triplet! they were there to do honor to ——, and the wife was neither expected nor desired. There lay my letters with their seals unbroken. I know all *his* letters by heart, Mr. Triplet. The seals unbroken — unbroken! Mr. Triplet."

"It is abominable!" cried Triplet, fiercely.

"And she who sat in my seat — in his house, and in his heart — was this lady, the actress you so praised to me?"

"That lady, ma'am," said Triplet, "has been deceived as well as you."

"I am convinced of it," said Mabel.

"And it is my painful duty to tell you, madam, that, with all her talents and sweetness, she has a fiery temper; yes, a very fiery temper," continued Triplet, stoutly, though with an uneasy glance in a certain direction; "and I have reason to believe she is angry, and thinks more of her own ill-usage than yours. Don't you go near her. Trust to my knowledge of the sex, madam; I am a dramatic writer. Did you ever read the 'Rival Queens'?"

"No."

"I thought not. Well, madam, one stabs the other, and the one that is stabbed says things to the other that are more biting than steel. The prudent course for you is to keep apart, and be always cheerful, and welcome him with a smile — and — have you read 'The Way to keep him'?"

"No, Mr. Triplet," said Mabel, firmly, "I cannot feign. Were I to attempt talent and deceit, I should be weaker than I am now. Honesty and right are all my strength. I will cry to her for justice and mercy. And if I cry in vain, I shall die, Mr. Triplet, that is all."

"Don't cry, dear lady," said Triplet, in a broken voice.

"It is impossible!" cried she, suddenly. "I am not learned, but I can read faces. I always could, and so could my Aunt Deborah before me. I read you right, Mr. Triplet, and I have read her too. Did not my heart warm to her amongst them all? There *is* a heart at the bottom of all her acting, and that heart is good and noble."

"She is, madam! she is! and charitable too. I know a family she saved from starvation and despair. O yes! she has a heart — to feel for the *poor* at all events."

"And am I not the poorest of the poor?" cried Mrs. Vane. "I have no father nor mother, Mr. Triplet; my husband is all I have in the world, — all I *had*, I mean."

Triplet, deeply affected himself, stole a look at Mrs. Woffington. She was pale; but her face was composed into a sort of dogged obstinacy. He was disgusted with her. "Madam," said he, sternly, "there is a wild beast more cruel and savage than wolves and bears; it is called 'a rival,' and don't you get in its way."

At this moment, in spite of Triplet's precaution, Mrs. Vane, casting her eye accidentally round, caught

sight of the picture, and instantly started up, crying, "She is there!" Triplet was thunder-struck. "What a likeness!" cried she, and moved towards the supposed picture.

"Don't go to it!" cried Triplet, aghast; "the color is wet."

She stopped; but her eye and her very soul dwelt upon the supposed picture; and Triplet stood quaking. "How like! It seems to breathe. You are a great painter, sir. A glass is not truer."

Triplet, hardly knowing what he said, muttered something about "critics and lights and shades."

"Then they are blind!" cried Mabel, never for a moment removing her eye from the object. "Tell me not of lights and shades. The pictures I see have a look of paint; but yours looks like life. O that she were here, as this *wonderful* image of hers is. I would speak to her. I am not wise or learned; but orators never pleaded as I would plead to her for my Ernest's heart." Still her eye glanced upon the picture; and I suppose her heart realized an actual presence, though her judgment did not; for by some irresistible impulse she sank slowly down and stretched her clasped hands towards it, while sobs and words seemed to break direct from her bursting heart. "O yes! you are beautiful, you are gifted, and the eyes of thousands wait upon your very word and look. What wonder that he, ardent, refined, and genial, should lay his heart at your feet? And I have nothing but my love to make him love me. I cannot take him from you. O, be generous to the weak! O, give him back to me! What is one heart more to you? You are so rich, and I am so poor, that without his love I have nothing, and can do nothing but sit me down and cry till my heart breaks. Give him back to me, beautiful, terrible woman! for, with all your gifts, you cannot love him as his poor Mabel does; and I will love you longer perhaps than men can love. I will kiss your feet, and Heaven above will bless you; and I will bless you and pray for you to my dying day. Ah! it is alive! I am frightened! I am frightened!" She ran to Triplet and seized his arm. "No!" cried she, quivering close to him; "I'm not frightened, for it was for me she — O Mrs. Woffington!" and, hiding her face on Mr. Triplet's shoulder, she blushed, and wept, and trembled.

What was it had betrayed Mrs. Woffington? *A tear!*

During the whole of this interview (which had taken a turn so unlooked for by the listener)she might have said with Beatrice, "What fire is in mine ears?" and what self-reproach and chill misgiving in her heart too. She had passed through a hundred emotions, as the young innocent wife told her sad and simple story. But, anxious now above all things to escape without being recognized, — for she had long repented having listened at all, or placed herself in her present position, — she fiercely mastered her countenance; but, though she ruled her features, she could not rule her heart. And when the young wife, instead of inveighing against her, came to her as a supplicant, with faith in her goodness, and sobbed to her for pity, a big tear rolled down her cheek, and proved her something more than a picture or an actress.

Mrs. Vane, as we have related, screamed and ran to Triplet.

Mrs. Woffington came instantly from her frame, and stood before them in a despairing attitude, with one hand upon her brow. For a single moment her impulse was to fly from the apartment, so ashamed was she of having listened, and of meeting her rival in this way; but she conquered this feeling, and, as soon as she saw Mrs. Vane too had recovered some composure, she said to Triplet, in a low but firm voice: —

"Leave us, sir. No living creature must hear what I say to this lady!"

Triplet remonstrated, but Mrs. Vane said, faintly: —

"O yes, good Mr. Triplet, I would rather you left me."

Triplet, full of misgivings, was obliged to retire.

"Be composed, ladies," said he, piteously. "Neither of you could help it"; and so he entered his inner room, where he sat and listened nervously, for he could not shake off all apprehension of a personal encounter.

In the room he had left there was a long, uneasy silence. Both ladies were greatly embarrassed. It was the actress who spoke first. All trace of emotion, except a certain pallor, was driven from her face. She spoke with very marked courtesy, but in tones that seemed to freeze as they dropped one by one from her mouth.

"I trust, madam, you will do me the justice to believe I did not know Mr. Vane was married?"

"I am sure of it!" said Mabel, warmly. "I feel you are as good as you are gifted."

"Mrs. Vane, I am not!" said the other, almost sternly. "You are deceived!"

"Then Heaven have mercy on me! No! I am not deceived, you pitied me. You speak coldly now; but I know your face and your heart, — you pity me!"

"I do respect, admire, and pity you," said Mrs. Woffington, sadly; "and I could consent nevermore to communicate with your — with Mr. Vane."

"Ah!" cried Mabel; "Heaven will bless you! But will you give me back his heart?"

"How can I do that?" said Mrs. Woffington, uneasily; she had not bargained for this.

"The magnet can repel as well as attract. Can you not break your own spell? What will his presence be to me, if his heart remain behind?"

"You ask much of me."

"Alas! I do."

"But I could do even this." She paused for breath. "And perhaps if you, who have not only touched my heart, but won my respect, were to say to me, 'Do so,' I should do it." Again she paused, and spoke with difficulty; for the bitter struggle took away her breath. "Mr. Vane thinks better of me than I deserve. I have — only — to make him believe me — — worthless — worse than I am — and he will drop me like an adder — and love you better, far better — for having known — admired — and despised Margaret Woffington."

"Oh!" cried Mabel, "I shall bless you every hour of my life." Her countenance brightened into rapture at the picture, and Mrs. Woffington's darkened with bitterness as she watched her.

But Mabel reflected. "Rob you of your good name?" said this pure creature. "Ah, Mabel Vane! you think but of yourself."

"I thank you, madam," said Mrs. Woffington, a little touched by this unexpected trait; "but some one must suffer here, and —"

Mabel Vane interrupted her. "This would be cruel and base," said she, firmly. "No woman's forehead shall be soiled by me. O madam! beauty is admired, talent is adored; but virtue is a woman's crown. With it, the poor are rich; without it, the rich are poor. It walks through life upright, and never hides its head for high or low."

Her face was as the face of an angel now; and the actress, conquered by her beauty and her goodness, actually bowed her head and gently kissed the hand of the country wife whom she had quizzed a few hours ago.

Frailty paid this homage to virtue!

Mabel Vane hardly noticed it; her eye was lifted to heaven, and her heart was gone there for help in a sore struggle.

"This would be to assassinate you; no less. And so, madam," she sighed, "with God's help, I do refuse your offer; choosing rather, if needs be, to live desolate, but innocent, — many a better than I hath lived so, —

ay! if God wills it, to die, with my hopes and my heart crushed, but my hands unstained; for so my humble life has passed."

How beautiful, great, and pure goodness is! It paints heaven on the face that has it; it wakens the sleeping souls that meet it.

At the bottom of Margaret Woffington's heart lay a soul, unknown to the world, scarce known to herself, — a heavenly harp, on which ill airs of passion had been played, — but still it was there, in tune with all that is true, pure, really great and good. And now the flush that a great heart sends to the brow, to herald great actions, came to her cheek and brow.

"Humble!" she cried. "Such as you are the diamonds of our race. You angel of truth and goodness, you have conquered!"

"O yes! yes! Thank God, yes!"

"What a fiend I must be could I injure you! The poor heart we have both overrated shall be yours again, and yours forever. In my hands it is painted glass; in the lustre of a love like yours it may become a priceless jewel." She turned her head away and pondered a moment, then suddenly offered to Mrs. Vane her hand with nobleness and majesty; "Can you trust me?" The actress too was divinely beautiful now, for her good angel shone through her.

"I could trust you with my life!" was the reply.

"Ah! if I might call you friend, dear lady, what would I not do — suffer — resign — to be worthy that title!"

"No, not friend!" cried the warm, innocent Mabel; "sister! I will call you sister. I have no sister."

"Sister!" said Mrs. Woffington. "O, do not mock me! Alas! you do not know what you say. That sacred name to me, from lips so pure as yours; Mrs. Vane," said she, timidly, "would you think me presumptuous if I begged you to — to let me kiss you?"

The words were scarce spoken before Mrs. Vane's arms were wreathed round her neck, and that innocent cheek laid sweetly to hers.

Mrs. Woffington strained her to her bosom, and two great hearts, whose grandeur the world, worshipper of charlatans, never discovered, had found each other out and beat against each other. A great heart is as quick to find another out as the world is slow.

Mrs. Woffington burst into a passion of tears and clasped Mabel tighter and tighter, in a half-despairing way. Mabel mistook the cause, but she kissed her tears away.

"Dear sister," said she, "be comforted. I love you. My heart warmed to you the first moment I saw you. A woman's love and gratitude are something. Ah! you will never find me change. This is for life, look you."

"God grant it!" cried the other poor woman. "O, it is not that, it is not that; it is because I am so little worthy of this. It is a sin to deceive you. I am not good like you. You do not know me!"

"You do not know yourself if you say so!" cried Mabel; and to her hearer the words seemed to come from heaven. "I read faces," said Mabel. "I read yours at sight, and you are what I set you down; and nobody must breathe a word against you, not even yourself. Do you think I am blind? You are beautiful, you are good, you are my sister, and I love you!"

"Heaven forgive me!" thought the other. "How can I resign this angel's good opinion? Surely Heaven sends this blessed dew to my parched heart!" And now she burned to make good her promise, and earn this virtuous wife's love. She folded her once more in her arms, and then, taking her by the hand, led her tenderly into Triplet's inner room. She made her lie down on the bed, and placed pillows high for her like a mother, and leaned over her as she lay, and pressed her lips gently to her fore-

head. Her fertile brain had already digested a plan, but she had resolved that this pure and candid soul should take no lessons of deceit. "Lie there," said she, "till I open the door, and then join us. Do you know what I am going to do? I am not going to restore you your husband's heart, but to show you it never really left you. You read faces; well, I read circumstances. Matters are not as you thought," said she, with all a woman's tact. "I cannot explain, but you will see." She then gave Mrs. Triplet peremptory orders not to let her charge rise from the bed until the preconcerted signal.

Mrs. Vane was, in fact, so exhausted by all she had gone through, that she was in no condition to resist. She cast a look of childlike confidence upon her rival, and then closed her eyes, and tried not to tremble all over and listen like a frightened hare.

It is one great characteristic of genius to do great things with little things. Paxton could see that so small a matter as a green-house could be dilated into a crystal palace, and with two common materials — glass and iron — he raised the palace of the genii; the brightest idea and the noblest ornament added to Europe in this century, — the koh-i-noor of the west. Livy's definition of Archimedes goes on the same ground.

Peg Woffington was a genius in her way. On entering Triplet's studio her eye fell upon three trifles, — Mrs. Vane's hood and mantle, the back of an old letter, and Mr. Triplet. (It will be seen how she worked these slight materials.) On the letter was written, in pencil, simply these two words, "Mabel Vane." Mrs. Woffington wrote above these words two more, "Alone and unprotected." She put this into Mr. Triplet's hand, and bade him take it down stairs and give it Sir Charles Pomander, whose retreat, she knew, must have been fictitious. "You will find him round the corner," said she, "or in some shop that looks this way." Whilst uttering these words she had put on Mrs. Vane's hood and mantle.

No answer was returned, and no Triplet went out of the door.

She turned, and there he was kneeling on both knees close under her.

"Bid me jump out of that window, madam; bid me kill those two gentlemen, and I will not rebel. You are a great lady, a talented lady; you have been insulted, and no doubt blood will flow. It ought, — it is your due; but that innocent lady, do not compromise her!"

"O Mr. Triplet, you need not kneel to me. I do not wish to force you to render me a service. I have no right to dictate to you."

"O dear!" cried Triplet, "don't talk in that way. I owe you my life, but I think of your own peace of mind, for you are not one to be happy if you injure the innocent!" He rose suddenly, and cried: "Madam, promise me not to stir till I come back!"

"Where are you going?"

"To bring the husband to his wife's feet, and so save one angel from despair, and another angel from a great crime."

"Well, I suppose you are wiser than I," said she. "But, if you are in earnest, you had better be quick, for somehow I am rather changeable about these people."

"You can't help that, madam, it is your sex; you are an angel. May I be permitted to kiss your hand? you are all goodness and gentleness at bottom. I fly to Mr. Vane, and we will be back before you have time to repent, and give the Devil the upper hand again, my dear, good, sweet lady!"

Away flew Triplet, all unconscious that he was not Mrs. Woffington's opponent, but puppet. He ran, he tore, animated by a good action, and

spurred by the notion that he was in direct competition with the fiend for the possession of his benefactress.

He had no sooner turned the corner, than Mrs. Woffington, looking out of the window, observed Sir Charles Pomander on the watch, as she had expected. She remained at the window with Mrs. Vane's hood on, until Sir Charles's eye in its wanderings lighted on her, and then, dropping Mrs. Vane's letter from the window, she hastily withdrew.

Sir Charles eagerly picked it up. His eye brightened when he read the short contents. With a self-satisfied smile he mounted the stair. He found in Triplet's house a lady who seemed startled at her late hardihood. She sat with her back to the door, her hood drawn tightly down, and wore an air of trembling consciousness. Sir Charles smiled again. He knew the sex, at least he said so. (It is an assertion often ventured upon.) Accordingly Sir Charles determined to come down from his height, and court nature and innocence in their own tones. This he rightly judged must be the proper course to take with Mrs. Vane. He fell down with mock ardor upon one knee.

The supposed Mrs. Vane gave a little squeak.

"Dear Mrs. Vane," cried he, "be not alarmed; loveliness neglected, and simplicity deceived, insure respect as well as adoration. Ah!" (A sigh.)

"O, get up, sir; do, please. Ah!" (A sigh.)

"You sigh, sweetest of human creatures. Ah! why did not a nature like yours fall into hands that would have cherished it as it deserves? Had Heaven bestowed on me this hand, which I take — "

"O, please, sir — "

"With the profoundest respect, would I have abandoned such a treasure for an actress? — a Woffington! as artificial and hollow a jade as ever winked at a side box!"

"Is she, sir?"

"Notorious, madam. Your husband is the only man in London who does not see through her. How different are you! Even I, who have no taste for actresses, found myself revived, refreshed, ameliorated, by that engaging picture of innocence and virtue you drew this morning; yourself the bright and central figure. Ah, dear angel! I remember all your favorites, and envy them their place in your recollections. Your Barbary mare — "

"Hen, sir!"

"Of course I meant hen; and Gray Gillian, his old nurse — "

"No, no, no! she is the mare, sir. He! he! he!"

"So she is. And Dame—Dame— "

"Best!"

"Ah! I knew it. You see how I remember them all. And all carry me back to those innocent days which fleet too soon, — days when an angel like you might have weaned me from the wicked pleasures of the town, to the placid delights of a rural existence!"

"Alas, sir!"

"You sigh. It is not yet too late. I am a convert to you; I swear it on this white hand. Ah! how can I relinquish it, pretty fluttering prisoner?"

"O sir, please — "

"Stay awhile."

"No! please, sir — "

"While I fetter thee with a worthy manacle." Sir Charles slipped a diamond ring of great value upon his pretty prisoner.

"La, sir, how pretty!" cried innocence.

Sir Charles then undertook to prove that the lustre of the ring was faint, compared with that of the present wearer's eyes. This did not suit innocence; she hung her head and fluttered, and showed a bashful repugnance to look her admirer in the face. Sir Charles playfully insisted, and Mrs. Woffington was beginning to be a little at a loss, when suddenly voices were heard upon the stairs.

"*My husband!*" cried the false Mrs. Vane, and in a moment she rose, and darted into Triplet's inner apartment.

Mr. Vane and Mr. Triplet were talking earnestly as they came up the stair. It seems the wise Triplet had prepared a little dramatic scene for his own refreshment, as well as for the ultimate benefit of all parties. He had persuaded Mr. Vane to accompany him by warm, mysterious promises of a happy *dénouement;* and now, having conducted that gentleman as far as his door, he was heard to say: —

"And now, sir, you shall see one who waits to forget grief, suspicion, — all, in your arms. Behold!" and here he flung the door open.

"The devil!"

"You flatter me!" said Pomander, who had had time to recover his *aplomb*, somewhat shaken, at first, by Mr. Vane's inopportune arrival.

Now it is to be observed that Mr. Vane had not long ago seen his wife lying on her bed, to all appearance incapable of motion.

Mr. Vane, before Triplet could recover his surprise, inquired of Pomander why he had sent for him. "And what," added he, "is the grief, suspicion, I am, according to Mr. Triplet, to forget in your arms?"

Mr. Vane added this last sentence in rather a testy manner.

"Why, the fact is —" began Sir Charles, without the remotest idea of what the fact was going to be.

"That Sir Charles Pomander —" interrupted Triplet.

"But Mr. Triplet is going to explain," said Sir Charles, keenly.

"Nay, sir; be yours the pleasing duty. But, now I think of it," resumed Triplet, "why not tell the simple truth? it is not a play! She I brought you here to see was not Sir Charles Pomander; but —"

"I forbid you to complete the name!" cried Pomander.

"I command you to complete the name!" cried Vane.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen! how can I do both?" remonstrated Triplet.

"Enough, sir!" cried Pomander. "It is a lady's secret. I am the guardian of that lady's honor."

"She has chosen a strange guardian of her honor!" said Vane, bitterly.

"Gentlemen!" cried poor Triplet, who did not at all like the turn things were taking, "I give you my word, she does not even know of Sir Charles's presence here!"

"Who?" cried Vane, furiously. "Man alive! who are you speaking of?"

"Mrs. Vane!"

"My wife!" cried Vane, trembling with anger and jealousy. "She here! and with this man?"

"No!" cried Triplet. "With me, with me! Not with him, of course."

"Boaster!" cried Vane, contemptuously. "But that is a part of your profession!"

Pomander, irritated, scornfully drew from his pocket the ladies' joint production, which had fallen at his feet from Mrs. Woffington's hand. He presented this to Mr Vane, who took it very uneasily; a mist swam before his eyes as he read the words: "Alone and unprotected, — Mabel Vane." He had no sooner read these words, than he found he loved his wife; when he tampered with his treasure, he did not calculate on another seeking it.

This was Pomander's hour of triumph! He proceeded coolly to explain to Mr. Vane, that, Mrs. Woffington having deserted him for Mr. Vane, and Mr. Vane his wife for Mrs. Woffington, the bereaved parties had, according to custom, agreed to console each other.

This soothing little speech was interrupted by Mr. Vane's sword flashing suddenly out of its sheath; while that gentleman, white with rage and jealousy, bade him instantly take to his guard, or be run through the body like some noxious animal.

Sir Charles drew his sword, and, in spite of Triplet's weak interference, half a dozen passes were rapidly exchanged, when suddenly the door of the inner room opened, and a lady in a hood pronounced, in a voice which was an excellent imitation of Mrs. Vane's, the word, "False!"

The combatants lowered their points.

"You hear, sir!" cried Triplet.

"You see, sir!" said Pomander.

"Mabel! — wife!" cried Mr. Vane, in agony. "O, say this is not true! O, say that letter is a forgery! Say, at least, it was by some treachery you were lured to this den of iniquity! O, speak!"

The lady silently beckoned to some person inside.

"You know I loved you! — you know how bitterly I repent the infatuation that brought me to the feet of another!"

The lady replied not, though Vane's soul appeared to hang upon her answer. But she threw the door open and there appeared another lady, the real Mrs. Vane! Mrs. Woffington then threw off her hood, and, to Sir Charles Pomander's consternation, revealed the features of that ingenious person, who seemed born to outwit him.

"You heard that fervent declaration, madam?" said she to Mrs. Vane. "I present to you, madam, a gentleman who regrets that he mistook the real direction of his feelings. And to you, sir," continued she, with great dignity, "I present a lady who will never mistake either her feelings or her duty."

"Ernest! dear Ernest!" cried Mrs. Vane, blushing as if she was the culprit. And she came forward all love and tenderness.

Her truant husband kneeled at her feet of course. No! he said, rather sternly, "How came you here, Mabel?"

"Mrs. Vane," said the actress, "fancied you had mislaid that weathercock, your heart, in Covent Garden, and that an actress had seen in it a fit companion for her own, and had feloniously appropriated it. She came to me to inquire after it."

"But this letter, signed by you?" said Vane, still addressing Mabel.

"Was written by me on a paper which accidentally contained Mrs. Vane's name. The fact is, Mr. Vane, — I can hardly look you in the face, — I had a little wager with Sir Charles here; his diamond ring — which you may see has become my diamond ring" — a horrible wry face from Sir Charles — "against my left glove, that I could bewitch a country gentleman's imagination, and make him think me an angel. Unfortunately the owner of his heart appeared, and, like poor Mr. Vane, took our play for earnest. It became necessary to disabuse her and to open your eyes. Have I done so?"

"You have, madam," said Vane, wincing at each word she said. But at last, by a mighty effort, he mastered himself, and, coming to Mrs. Woffington with a quivering lip, he held out his hand suddenly in a very manly way. "I have been the dupe of my own vanity," said he, "and I thank you for this lesson." Poor Mrs. Woffington's fortitude had well-nigh left her at this.

"Mabel," he cried, "is this humiliation any punishment for my folly? any guaranty for my repentance? Can you forgive me?"

"It is all forgiven, Ernest. But O, you are mistaken." She glided to Mrs. Woffington. "What do we not owe you, sister?" whispered she.

"Nothing! that word pays all," was the reply. She then slipped her address into Mrs. Vane's hand, and, courtesying to all the company, she hastily left the room.

Sir Charles Pomander followed; but he was not quick enough: she got a start, and purposely avoided him, and for three days neither the public nor private friends saw this poor woman's face.

Mr. and Mrs. Vane prepared to go

also; but Mrs. Vane would thank good Mr. Triplet and Mrs. Triplet for their kindness to her.

Triplet the benevolent blushed, was confused and delighted; but suddenly, turning somewhat sorrowful, he said: "Mr. Vane, madam, made use of an expression which caused a momentary pang. He called this a den of iniquity. Now this is my studio! But never mind."

Mr. Vane asked his pardon for so absurd an error, and the pair left Triplet in all the enjoyment which does come now and then to an honest man, whether this dirty little world will or not.

A coach was called and they went home to Bloomsbury. Few words were said; but the repentant husband often silently pressed this angel to his bosom, and the tears which found their way to her beautiful eyelashes were tears of joy.

This weakish, and consequently villanous, though not ill-disposed person would have gone down to Willoughby that night; but his wife had great good sense. She would not take her husband off, like a schoolboy caught out of bounds. She begged him to stay while she made certain purchases; but, for all that, her heart burned to be at home. So in less than a week after the events we have related they left London.

Meantime, every day Mrs. Vane paid a quiet visit to Mrs. Woffington (for some days the actress admitted no other visitor), and was with her but two hours before she left London. On that occasion she found her very sad.

"I shall never see you again in this world," said she; "but I beg of you to write to me, that my mind may be in contact with yours."

She then asked Mabel, in her half-sorrowful, half-bitter way, how many months it would be ere she was forgotten.

Mabel answered by quietly crying. So then they embraced; and Mabel assured her friend she was not one of those who change their minds. "It is for life, dear sister; it is for life," cried she.

"Swear this to me," said the other, almost sternly. "But no. I have more confidence in that candid face and pure nature than in a human being's oath. If you are happy, remember you owe me something. If you are unhappy, come to me, and I will love you as men cannot love."

Then vows passed between them, for a singular tie bound these two women; and then the actress showed a part at least of her sore heart to her new sister; and that sister was surprised and grieved, and pitied her truly and deeply, and they wept on each other's neck; and at last they were fain to part. They parted; and true it was, they never met again in this world. They parted in sorrow; but when they meet again, it shall be with joy.

Women are generally such faithless, unscrupulous, and pitiless humbugs in their dealings with their own sex, — which, whatever they may say, they despise at heart, — that I am happy to be able to say, Mrs. Vane proved true as steel. She was a noble-minded, simple-minded creature; she was also a constant creature. Constancy is a rare, a beautiful, a godlike virtue.

Four times every year she wrote a long letter to Mrs. Woffington; and twice a year, in the cold weather, she sent her a hamper of country delicacies, that would have victualled a small garrison. And when her sister left this earthly scene, — a humble, pious, long-repentant Christian, — Mrs. Vane wore mourning for her, and sorrowed over her; but not as those who cannot hope to meet again.

My story as a work of art — good, bad, or indifferent — ends with that last sentence. If a reader accompanies me further, I shall feel flattered, and he does so at his own risk.

My reader knows that all this befell

long ago. That Woffington is gay, and Triplet sad, no more. That Mabel's, and all the bright eyes of that day, have long been dim, and all its cunning voices hushed. Judge then whether I am one of those happy story-tellers who can end with a wedding. No! this story must wind up, as yours and mine must — to-morrow — or to-morrow — or to-morrow! when our little sand is run.

Sir Charles Pomander lived a man of pleasure until sixty. He then became a man of pain; he dragged the chain about eight years, and died miserably.

Mr. Cibber not so much died as "slipped his wind," — a nautical expression, that conveys the idea of an easy exit. He went off quiet and genteel. He was past eighty, and had lived fast. His servant called him at seven in the morning. "I will shave at eight," said Mr. Cibber. John brought the hot water at eight; but his master had taken advantage of this interval in his toilet to die! — to avoid shaving?

Snarl and Soaper conducted the criticism of their day with credit and respectability until a good old age, and died placidly a natural death, like twaddle, sweet or sour.

The Triplets, while their patroness lived, did pretty well. She got a tragedy of his accepted at her theatre. She made him send her a copy, and with her scissors cut out about half; sometimes thinning, sometimes cutting bodily away. But, lo! the inherent vanity of Mr. Triplet came out strong. Submissively, but obstinately, he fought for the discarded beauties. Unluckily, he did this one day that his patroness was in one of her bitter humors. So she instantly gave him back his manuscript, with a sweet smile owned herself inferior in judgment to him, and left him unmolested.

Triplet breathed freely; a weight was taken off him. The savage steel (he applied this title to the actress's scissors) had spared his *purpurei panni*. He was played, pure and intact, a calamity the rest of us grumbling escape.

But it did so happen that the audience were of the actress's mind, and found the words too exuberant, and the business of the play too scanty in proportion. At last their patience was so sorely tried that they supplied one striking incident to a piece deficient in facts. They gave the manager the usual broad hint, and in the middle of Triplet's third act a huge veil of green baize descended upon "The Jealous Spaniard."

Failing here, Mrs. Woffington contrived often to befriend him in his other arts, and moreover she often sent Mr. Triplet what she called a snug investment, a loan of ten pounds, to be repaid at Doomsday, with interest and compound interest, according to the Scriptures; and, although she laughed, she secretly believed she was to get her ten pounds back, double and treble. And I believe so too.

Some years later Mrs. Triplet became eventful. She fell ill, and lay a dying; but one fine morning, after all hope had been given up, she suddenly rose and dressed herself. She was quite well in body now, but insane.

She continued in this state a month, and then by God's mercy she recovered her reason; but now the disease fell another step, and lighted upon her temper, — a more athletic vixen was not to be found. She had spoiled Triplet for this by being too tame, so when the dispensation came they sparred daily. They were now thoroughly unhappy. They were poor as ever, and their benefactress was dead, and they had learned to snap. A speculative tour had taken this pair to Bristol, then the second city in England. They sojourned in the suburbs.

One morning the postman brought a letter for Triplet, who was showing his landlord's boy how to plant onions. (N. B. Triplet had never planted an onion, but he was one of your *a priori* gentlemen, and could show

anybody how to do anything.) Triplet held out his hand for the letter, but the postman held out his hand for half a crown first. Trip's profession had transpired, and his clothes inspired diffidence. Triplet appealed to his good feeling.

He replied with exultation, "That he had none left." (A middle-aged postman, no doubt.)

Triplet then suddenly started from entreaty to King Cambyses' vein. In vain!

Mrs. Triplet came down, and essayed the blandishments of the softer sex. In vain! And, as there were no assets, the postman marched off down the road.

Mrs. Triplet glided after him like an assassin, beckoning on Triplet, who followed, doubtful of her designs. Suddenly (truth compels me to relate this) she seized the obdurate official from behind, pinned both his arms to his side, and with her nose furiously telegraphed her husband.

He, animated by her example, plunged upon the man and tore the letter from his hand, and opened it before his eyes.

It happened to be a very windy morning, and when he opened the letter an enclosure, printed on much finer paper, was caught into the air. and went down the wind. Triplet followed in kangaroo leaps, like a dancer making a flying exit.

The postman cried on all good citizens for help. Some collected and laughed at him; Mrs. Triplet explaining that they were poor, and could not pay half a crown for the freight of half an ounce of paper. She held him convulsively until Triplet reappeared.

That gentleman on his return was ostentatiously calm and dignified. "You are, or were, in perturbation about half a crown," said he. "There, sir, is a twenty-pound note, oblige me with nineteen pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence. Should your resources be unequal to such a demand, meet me at the 'Green Cat and Brown Frogs,' after dinner, when you shall receive your half-crown, and drink another upon the occasion of my sudden accession to unbounded affluence."

The postman was staggered by the sentence, and overawed by the note, and chose the "Cat and Frogs," and liquid half-crown.

Triplet took his wife down the road and showed her the letter and enclosure. The letter ran thus:—

"Sir:—

"We beg respectfully to inform you that our late friend and client, James Triplet, Merchant, of the Minories, died last August, without a will, and that you are his heir.

"His property amounts to about twenty thousand pounds, besides some reversions. Having possessed the confidence of your late uncle, we should feel honored and gratified if you should think us worthy to act professionally for yourself.

"We enclose twenty pounds, and beg you will draw upon us as far as five thousand pounds, should you have immediate occasion.

"We are, sir,
"Your humble servants,
"James and John Allmitt."

It was some time before these children of misfortune could realize this enormous stroke of compensation; but at last it worked its way into their spirits, and they began to sing, to triumph, and dance upon the king's highway.

Mrs. Triplet was the first to pause, and take better views. "O James!" she cried, "we have suffered much! we have been poor, but honest, and the Almighty has looked upon us at last!"

Then they began to reproach themselves.

"O James! I have been a peevish woman,—an ill wife to you, this many years!"

"No, no!" cried Triplet, with tears in his eyes. "It is I who have been rough and brutal. Poverty tried us

too hard; but we were not like the rest of them, — we were always faithful to the altar. And the Almighty has seen us, though we often doubted it."

"I never doubted that, James."

So then the poor things fell on their knees upon the public road, and thanked God. If any man had seen them, he would have said they were mad. Yet madder things are done every day by gentlemen with faces as grave as the parish bull's. And then they rose, and formed their little plans.

Triplet was for devoting four fifths to charity, and living like a prince on the remainder. But Mrs. Triplet thought the poor were entitled to no more than two thirds, and they themselves ought to bask in a third, to make up for what they had gone through; and then suddenly she sighed, and burst into tears. "Lucy! Lucy!" sobbed she.

Yes, reader, God had taken little Lucy! And her mother cried to think all this wealth and comfort had come too late for her darling child.

"Do not cry. Lucy is richer, a thousand times, than you are, with your twenty thousand pounds."

Their good resolutions were carried out, for a wonder. Triplet lived for years, the benefactor of all the loose fish that swim in and round theatres; and, indeed, the unfortunate seldom appealed to him in vain. He now predominated over the arts, instead of climbing them. In his latter day, he became an oracle, as far as the science of acting was concerned; and, what is far more rare, he really got to know *something* about it. This was owing to two circumstances: first, he ceased to run blindfold in a groove behind the scenes; second, he became a frequenter of the first row of the pit, and that is where the whole critic, and two thirds of the true actor, is made.

On one point, to his dying day, his feelings guided his judgment. He never could see an actress equal to his Woffington. Mrs. Abington was grace personified, but so was Woffington, said the old man. And Abington's voice is thin, Woffington's was sweet and mellow. When Jordan rose, with her voice of honey, her dewy freshness, and her heavenly laugh, that melted in along with her words, like the gold in the quartz, Triplet was obliged to own her the goddess of beautiful gayety; but still he had the last word: "Woffington was all *she* is, except her figure. Woffington was a Hebe; your Nell Jordan is little better than a dowdy."

Triplet almost reached the present century. He passed through great events, but they did not excite him; his eye was upon the arts. When Napoleon drew his conquering sword on England, Triplet's remark was: "Now we shall be driven upon native talent, thank Heaven!" The storms of Europe shook not Triplet. The fact is, nothing that happened on the great stage of the world seemed real to him. He believed in nothing, where there was no curtain visible. But even the grotesque are not good in vain. Many an eye was wet round his dying bed, and many a tear fell upon his grave. He made his final exit in the year of grace 1799. And I, who laugh at him, would leave this world to-day to be with him; for I am tossing at sea, — he is in port.

A straightforward character like Mabel's becomes a firm character with years. Long ere she was forty, her hand gently but steadily ruled Willoughby House, and all in it. She and Mr. Vane lived very happily; he gave her no fresh cause for uneasiness. Six months after their return, she told him what burned in that honest heart of hers, the truth about Mrs. Woffington. The water rushed to his eyes, but his heart was now wholly his wife's; and gratitude to Mrs. Woffington for her noble conduct was the only sentiment awakened.

"You must repay her, dearest," said he. "I know you love her, and until to-day it gave me pain; now it

gives me pleasure. We owe her much."

The happy, innocent life of Mabel Vane is soon summed up. Frank as the day, constant as the sun, pure as the dew, she passed the golden years preparing herself and others for a still brighter eternity. At home, it was she who warmed and cheered the house, and the hearth, more than all the Christmas fires. Abroad, she shone upon the poor like the sun. She led her beloved husband by the hand to Heaven. She led her children the same road; and she was leading her grandchildren when the angel of death came for her; and she slept in peace.

Many remember her. For she alone, of all our tale, lived in this present century; but they speak of her as "old Madam Vane," — her whom we knew so young and fresh.

She lies in Willoughby Church, — her mortal part; her spirit is with the spirits of our mothers and sisters, reader, that are gone before us; with the tender mothers, the chaste wives, the loyal friends, and the just women of all ages.

RESURGET.

I come to her last, who went first; but I could not have stayed by the others, when once I had laid my darling asleep. It seemed for a while as if the events of our tale did her harm; but it was not so in the end.

Not many years afterwards, she was engaged by Mr. Sheridan, at a very heavy salary, and went to Dublin. Here the little girl, who had often carried a pitcher on her head down to the Liffey, and had played Polly Peachum in a booth, became a lion; dramatic, political, and literary, and the centre of the wit of that wittiest of cities.

But the Dublin ladies and she did not coalesce. They said she was a naughty woman, and not fit for them morally. She said they had but two topics, "silks and scandal," and were unfit for her intellectually.

This was the saddest part of her history. But it is darkest just before sunrise. She returned to London. Not long after, it so happened that she went to a small church in the city one Sunday afternoon. The preacher was such as we have often heard; but not so this poor woman, in her day of sapless theology, ere John Wesley waked the snoring church. Instead of sending a dry clatter of morality about their ears, or evaporating the Bible in the thin generalities of the pulpit, this man drove God's truths home to the hearts of men and women. In his hands the divine virtues were thunderbolts, not swans' down. With good sense, plain speaking, and a heart yearning for the souls of his brethren and his sisters, he stormed the bosoms of many; and this afternoon, as he reasoned like Paul of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, sinners trembled, — and Margaret Woffington was of those who trembled.

After this day, she came ever to the narrow street where shone this house of God; and still new light burst upon her heart and conscience. Here she learned why she was unhappy; here she learned how alone she could be happy; here she learned to know herself; and, the moment she knew herself, she abhorred herself, and repented in dust and ashes.

This strong and straightforward character made no attempt to reconcile two things that an average Christian would have continued to reconcile. Her interest fell in a moment before her new sense of right. She flung her profession from her like a poisonous weed.

Long before this, Mrs. Vane had begged her to leave the stage. She had replied, that it was to her what wine is to weak stomachs. "But," added she, "do not fear that I will ever crawl down hill, and unravel my own reputation; nor will I ever do as I have seen others, — stand groaning at the wing, to go on giggling,

and come off gasping. No! the first night the boards do not spring beneath my feet, and the pulse of the public beat under my hand, I am gone! Next day, at rehearsal, instead of Woffington, a note will come, to tell the manager that henceforth Woffington is herself, — at Twickenham, or Richmond, or Harrow-on-the-Hill, far from his dust, his din, and his glare, — quiet, till God takes her: amidst grass, and flowers, and charitable deeds."

This day had not come: it was in the zenith of her charms and her fame that she went home one night after a play, and never entered a theatre, by front door or back door, again. She declined all leave-taking and ceremony.

"When a publican shuts up shop and ceases to diffuse liquid poison, he does not invite the world to put up the shutters; neither will I. Actors overrate themselves ridiculously," added she; "I am not of that importance to the world, nor the world to me. I fling away a dirty old glove instead of soiling my fingers filling it with more guineas, and the world loses in me, what? another old glove, full of words; half of them idle, the rest wicked, untrue, silly, or impure. *Rougissons, taisons-nous, et partons.*"

She now changed her residence, and withdrew politely from her old associates, courting two classes only, the good and the poor. She had always supported her mother and sister; but now charity became her system. The following is characteristic: —

A gentleman who had greatly admired this dashing actress met one day, in the suburbs, a lady in an old black silk gown and a gray shawl, with a large basket on her arm. She showed him its contents, — worsted stockings of prodigious thickness, — which she was carrying to some of her *protégés*.

"But surely that is a waste of your valuable time," remonstrated her admirer. "Much better buy them."

"But, my good soul," replied the representative of Sir Harry Wildair, "you can't buy them. Nobody in this wretched town can knit worsted hose except Woffington."

Conversions like this are open to just suspicion, and some did not fail to confound her with certain great sinners, who have turned austere self-deceivers when sin smiled no more. But this was mere conjecture. The facts were clear, and speaking to the contrary. This woman left folly at its brightest, and did not become austere: on the contrary, though she laughed less, she was observed to smile far oftener than before. She was a humble and penitent, but cheerful, hopeful Christian.

Another class of detractors took a somewhat opposite ground: they accused her of bigotry for advising a young female friend against the stage as a business. But let us hear herself. This is what she said to the girl: —

"At the bottom of my heart, I always loved and honored virtue. Yet the tendencies of the stage so completely overcame my good sentiments, that I was for years a worthless woman. It is a situation of uncommon and incessant temptation. Ask yourself, my child, whether there is nothing else you can do, but this. It is, I think, our duty and our wisdom to fly temptation whenever we can, as it is to resist it when we cannot escape it."

Was this the tone of bigotry?

Easy in fortune, penitent, but cheerful, Mrs. Woffington had now but one care, — to efface the memory of her former self, and to give as many years to purity and piety as had gone to folly and frailty. This was not to be! The Almighty did not permit, or perhaps I should say, did not require this.

Some unpleasant symptoms had long attracted her notice, but in the bustle of her profession had received little attention. She was now persuaded by her own medical attendant to consult Dr. Bowdler, who had a great reputation, and had been years

ago an acquaintance and an admirer. He visited her, he examined her by means little used in that day, and he saw at once that her days were numbered.

Dr. Bowdler's profession and experience had not steeled his heart as they generally do and must do. He could not tell her this sad news, so he asked her for pen and paper, and said, I will write a prescription to Mr. ——. He then wrote, not a prescription, but a few lines, begging Mr. —— to convey the cruel intelligence by degrees, and with care and tenderness. "It is all we can do for her," said he.

He looked so grave while writing the supposed prescription, that it unluckily occurred to Mrs. Woffington to look over him. She stole archly behind him, and, with a smile on her face, — read her death-warrant.

It was a cruel stroke! A gasping sigh broke from her. At this Dr. Bowdler looked up, and to his horror saw the sweet face he had doomed to the tomb looking earnestly and anxiously at him, and very pale and grave. He was shocked, and, strange to say, she, whose death-warrant he had signed, ran and brought him a glass of wine, for he was quite overcome. Then she gave him her hand in her own sweet way, and bade him not grieve for her, for she was not afraid to die, and had long learned that "life is a walking shadow, a poor, poor player, who frets and struts his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more."

But no sooner was the doctor gone, than she wept bitterly. Poor soul! she had set her heart upon living as many years to God as she had to the world, and she had hoped to wipe out her former self.

"Alas!" she said to her sister, "I have done more harm than I can ever hope to do good now; and my long life of folly and wickedness will be remembered, — will be what they call famous; my short life of repentance who will know, or heed, or take to profit?"

But she soon ceased to repine. She bowed to the will of Heaven, and set her house in order, and awaited her summons. The tranquillity of her life and her courageous spirit were unfavorable to the progress of disease, and I am glad to say she was permitted to live nearly three years after this, and these three years were the happiest period of her whole life. Works of piety and love made the days eventful. She was at home now, — she had never been at home in folly and loose living. All her bitterness was gone now, with its cause.

Reader, it was with her as it is with many an autumn day: clouds darken the sun, rain and wind sweep over all, — till day declines. But then comes one heavenly hour, when all ill things seem spent. There is no more wind, no more rain. The great sun comes forth, — not fiery bright indeed, but full of tranquil glory, and warms the sky with ruby waves, and the hearts of men with hope, as, parting with us for a little space, he glides slowly and peacefully to rest.

So fared it with this humble, penitent, and now happy Christian.

A part of her desire was given her. She lived long enough to read a firm recantation of her former self, to show the world a great repentance, and to leave upon indelible record one more proof, what alone is true wisdom, and where alone true joys are to be found.

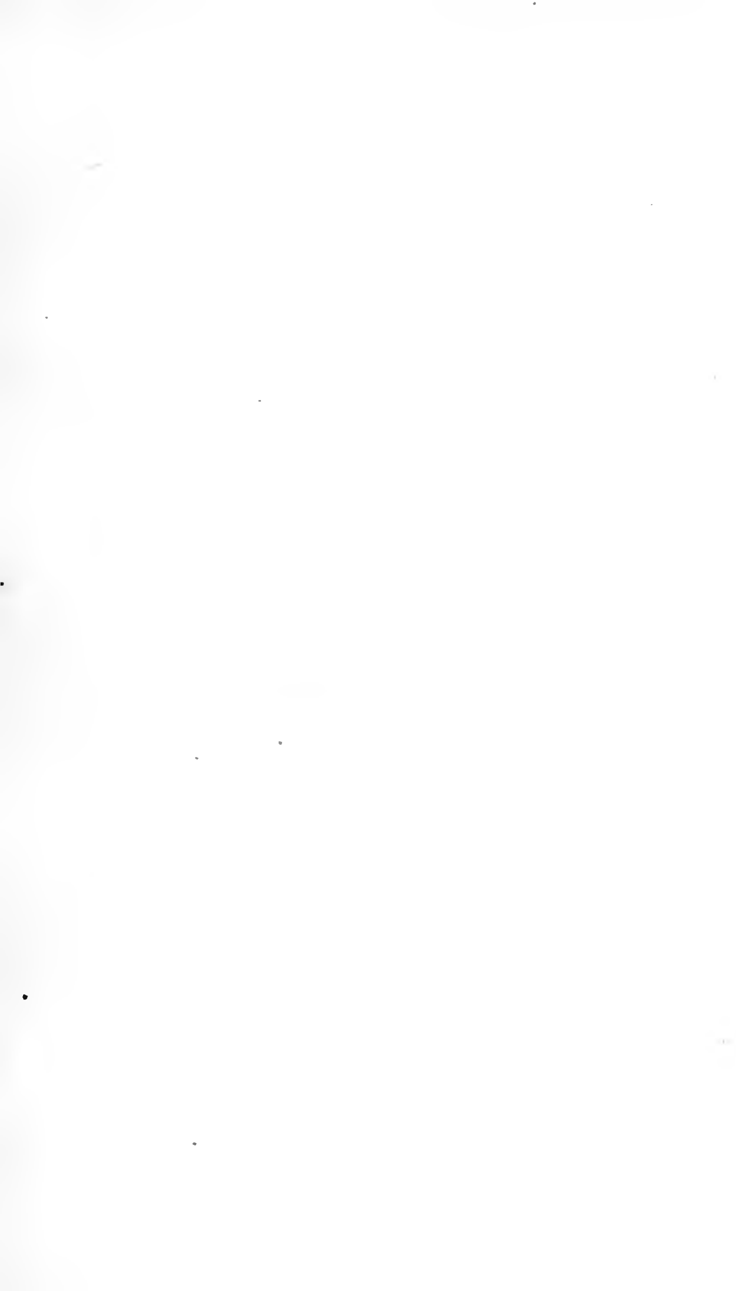
She endured some physical pain, as all must who die in their prime. But this never wrung a sigh from her great heart; and within she had the peace of God, which passes all understanding.

I am not strong enough to follow her to her last hour; nor is it needed. Enough that her own words came true. When the great summons came, it found her full of hope, and peace, and joy; sojourning, not dwelling, upon earth; far from dust and din and vice; the Bible in her hand, the Cross in her heart; quiet; amidst grass, and flowers, and charitable deeds.

"NON OMNEM MORITURAM."

CHRISTIE JOHNSTONE.

A NOVEL.



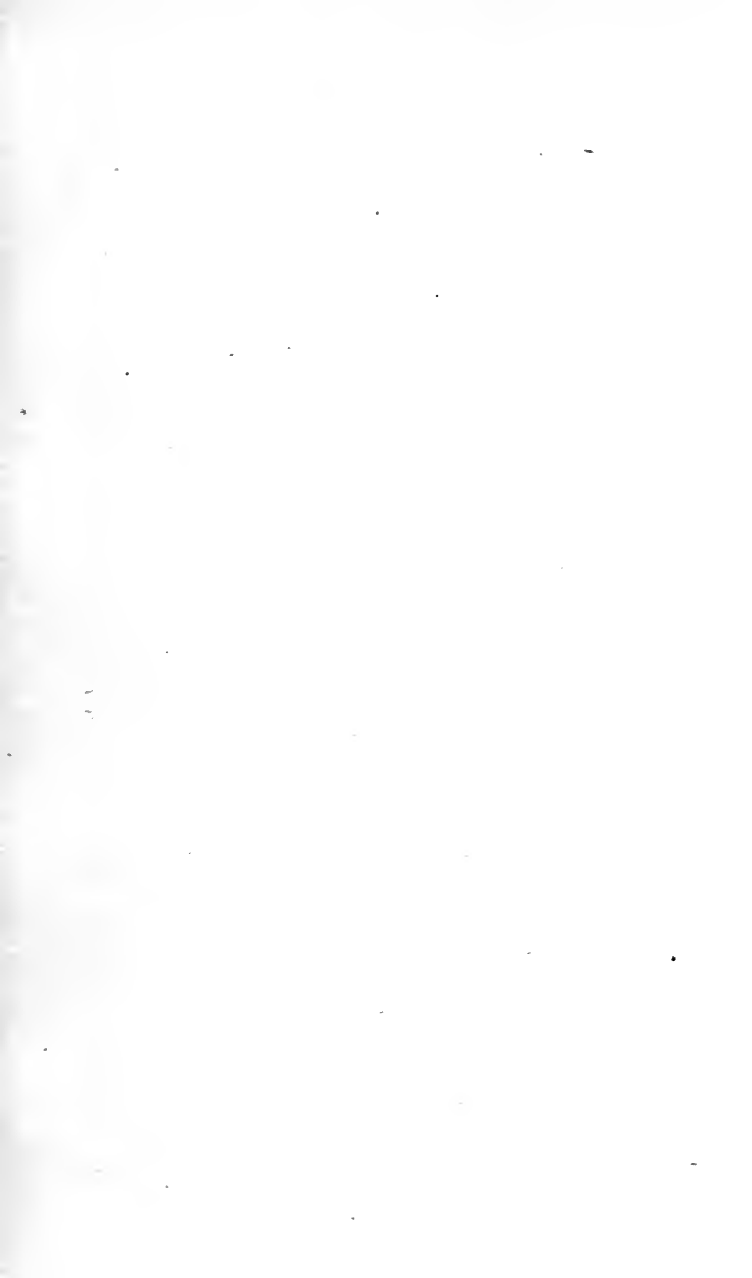
I DEDICATE

ALL THAT IS GOOD IN THIS WORK

TO

MY MOTHER

C. R



CHRISTIE JOHNSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

Viscount Ipsden, aged twenty-five, income eighteen thousand pounds per year, constitution equine, was unhappy! This might surprise some people; but there are certain blessings, the non-possession of which makes more people discontented than their possession renders happy.

Foremost among these are "Wealth and Rank": were I to add "Beauty" to the list, such men and women as go by fact, not by conjecture, would hardly contradict me.

The fortunate man is he who, born poor, or nobody, works gradually up to wealth and consideration, and, having got them, dies before he finds they were not worth so much trouble.

Lord Ipsden started with nothing to win; and naturally lived for amusement. Now nothing is so sure to cease to please as pleasure, — to amuse, as amusement: unfortunately for himself he could not at this period of his life warm to politics; so, having exhausted his London clique, he rolled through the cities of Europe in his carriage, and cruised its shores in his yacht. But he was not happy!

He was a man of taste, and sipped the arts and other knowledge, as he sauntered Europe round.

But he was not happy.

"What shall I do?" said *l'ennuyé*.

"Distinguish yourself," said one.

"How?"

No immediate answer.

"Take a *prima donna* over," said another.

Well, the man took a *prima donna* over, which scolded its maid from the Alps to Dover in the *lingua Toscana* without the *bocca Romana*, and sang in London without applause; because what goes down at La Scala does not generally go down at Il Teatro della Regina, Haymarket.

So then my Lord strolled into Russia; there he drove a pair of horses, one of whom put his head down and did the work; the other pranced and capricoled alongside, all unconscious of the trace. He seemed happier than his working brother; but the biped whose career corresponded with this playful animal's was not happy!

At length an event occurred that promised to play an adagio upon Lord Ipsden's mind. He fell in love with Lady Barbara Sinclair; and he had no sooner done this than he felt, as we are all apt to do on similar occasions, how wise a thing he had done!

Besides a lovely person, Lady Barbara Sinclair had a character that he saw would make him; and, in fact, Lady Barbara Sinclair was, to an inexperienced eye, the exact opposite of Lord Ipsden.

Her mental pulse was as plethoric as his was languid.

She was as enthusiastic as he was cool.

She took a warm interest in everything.

She believed that government is a

science, and one that goes with *copia verborum*.

She believed that, in England, government is administered, not by a set of men whose salaries range from eighty to five hundred pounds a year, and whose names are never heard, but by the First Lord of the Treasury, and other great men.

Hence she inferred, that it matters very much to all of us in whose hand is the rudder of that state vessel which goes down the wind of public opinion, without veering a point, let who will be at the helm.

She also cared very much who was the new Bishop. Religion — if not religion, theology — would be affected thereby.

She was enthusiastic about poets; imagined their verse to be some sort of clew to their characters, and so on.

She had other theories, which will be indicated by and by; at present it is enough to say that her mind was young, healthy, somewhat original, full of fire and faith, and empty of experience.

Lord Ipsden loved her! it was easy to love her.

First, there was not, in the whole range of her mind and body, one grain of affectation of any sort.

She was always, in point of fact, under the influence of some male mind or other, generally some writer. What young woman is not, more or less, a mirror? But she never imitated or affected; she was always herself, by whomsoever colored.

Then she was beautiful and eloquent; much too high-bred to put a restraint upon her natural manner, she was often more *naïve*, and even brusque, than your would-be aristocrats dare to be; but what a charming abruptness hers was!

I do not excel in descriptions, and yet I want to give you some carnal idea of a certain peculiarity and charm this lady possessed; permit me to call a sister art to my aid.

There has lately stepped upon the French stage a charming personage, whose manner is quite free from the affectation that soils nearly all French actresses, — Mademoiselle Madeleine Brohan! When you see this young lady play Mademoiselle La Seglière, you see high-bred sensibility personified, and you see something like Lady Barbara Sinclair.

She was a connection of Lord Ipsden's, but they had not met for two years, when they encountered each other in Paris just before the commencement of this "Dramatic Story," "Novel" by courtesy.

The month he spent in Paris, near her, was a bright month to Lord Ipsden. A by-stander would not have gathered, from his manner, that he was warmly in love with this lady, but, for all that, his Lordship was gradually uncoiling himself, and gracefully, quietly, basking in the rays of Barbara Sinclair.

He was also just beginning to take an interest in subjects of the day, — ministries, flat paintings, controversial novels, Cromwell's spotless integrity, &c., — why not? They interested her.

Suddenly the lady and her family returned to England. Lord Ipsden, who was going to Rome, came to England instead.

She had not been five days in London, before she made her preparations to spend six months in Perthshire.

This brought matters to a climax.

Lord Ipsden proposed in form.

Lady Barbara was surprised; she had not viewed his graceful attentions in that light at all. However, she answered by letter his proposal which had been made by letter.

After a few of those courteous words a lady always bestows on a gentleman who has offered her the highest compliment any man has it in his power to offer any woman, she came to the point in the following characteristic manner: —

"The man I marry must have two things, virtues and vices, — you have neither: you do nothing, and never

will do anything but sketch and hum tunes, and dance and dangle: forget this folly the day after to-morrow, my dear Ipsden, and, if I may ask a favor of one to whom I refuse that which would not be a kindness, be still good friends with her who will always be

"Your affectionate *Cousin*,

"BARBARA SINCLAIR."

Soon after this effusion she vanished into Perthshire, leaving her cousin stunned by a blow which she thought would be only a scratch to one of his character.

Lord Ipsden relapsed into greater listlessness than before he had cherished these crushed hopes. The world now became really dark and blank to him. He was too languid to go anywhere or do anything; a republican might have compared the settled expression of his handsome, hopeless face with that of most day-laborers of the same age, and moderated his envy of the rich and titled.

At last he became so pale as well as languid, that Mr. Saunders interfered.

Saunders was a model valet and factotum; who had been with his master ever since he left Eton, and had made himself necessary to him in their journeys.

The said Saunders was really an invaluable servant, and, with a world of obsequiousness, contrived to have his own way on most occasions. He had, I believe, only one great weakness, that of imagining a beau-ideal of aristocracy and then outdoing it in the person of John Saunders.

Now this Saunders was human, and could not be eight years with this young gentleman and not take some little interest in him. He was flunky, and took a great interest in him, as stepping-stone to his own greatness. So when he saw him turning pale and thin, and reading one letter fifty times, he speculated and inquired what was the matter. He brought the intellect of Mr. Saunders to bear on the question at the following angle: —

"Now, if I was a young lord with £20,000 a year, and all the world at my feet, what would make me in this way?"

"Why, the liver! Nothing else."

"And that is what is wrong with him, you may depend."

This conclusion arrived at, Mr. Saunders coolly wrote his convictions to Dr. Aberford, and desired that gentleman's immediate attention to the case. An hour or two later, he glided into his lord's room, not without some secret trepidation, no trace of which appeared on his face. He pulled a long histrionic countenance. "My Lord," said he, in soft, melancholy tones, "your Lordship's melancholy state of health gives me great anxiety; and, with many apologies to your Lordship, the Doctor is sent for, my Lord."

"Why, Saunders, you are mad; there is nothing the matter with me."

"I beg your Lordship's pardon, your Lordship is very ill, and Dr. Aberford sent for."

"You may go, Saunders."

"Yes, my Lord. I could n't help it; I've outstepped my duty, my Lord, but I could not stand quiet and see your Lordship dying by inches." Here Mr. S. put a cambric handkerchief artistically to his eyes, and glided out, having disarmed censure.

Lord Ipsden fell into a revery.

"Is my mind or my body disordered? Dr. Aberford! — absurd! — Saunders is getting too pragmatical. The Doctor shall prescribe for him instead of me; by Jove, that would serve him right." And my Lord faintly chuckled. "No! this is what I am ill of," — and he read the fatal note again. "I do nothing! — cruel, unjust," sighed he. "I could have done, would have done, anything to please her. Do nothing! nobody does anything now, — things don't come in your way to be done as they used centuries ago, or we should do them just the same; it is their fault, not ours," argued his Lordship, somewhat confusedly; then, leaning his brow upon the sofa, he wished to die: for,

at that dark moment, life seemed to this fortunate man an aching void; a weary, stale, flat, unprofitable tale; a faded flower; a ball-room after daylight has crept in, and music, motion, and beauty are fled away.

"Dr. Aberford, my Lord."

This announcement, made by Mr. Saunders, checked his Lordship's revery.

"Insults everybody, does he not, Saunders?"

"Yes, my Lord," said Saunders, monotonously.

"Perhaps he will me; that might amuse me," said the other.

A moment later the Doctor bowled into the apartment, tugging at his gloves, as he ran.

The contrast between him and our poor rich friend is almost beyond human language.

Here lay on a sofa Ipsden, one of the most distinguished young gentlemen in Europe: a creature incapable, by nature, of a rugged tone or a coarse gesture: a being without the slightest apparent pretension, but refined beyond the wildest dream of dandies. To him, enter Aberford, perspiring and shouting. He was one of those globules of human quicksilver one sees now and then for two seconds; they are, in fact, two globules; their head is one, invariably bald, round, and glittering: the body is another in activity and shape, *totus teres atque rotundus;* and in fifty years they live five centuries. *Horum Rex Aberford,* — of these our Doctor was the chief. He had hardly torn off one glove, and rolled as far as the third flower from the door on his Lordship's carpet, before he shouted: —

"This is my patient, lolloping in pursuit of health. — Your hand," added he. For he was at the sofa long before his Lordship could glide off it.

"Tongue. — Pulse is good. — Breathe in my face."

"Breathe in your face, sir! how can I do that?" (with an air of mild doubt.)

"By first inhaling, and then exhaling in the direction required, or how can I make acquaintance with your bowels?"

"My bowels?"

"The abdomen, and the greater and lesser intestines. Well, never mind, I can get at them another way; give your heart a slap, so. — That 's your liver. — And that 's your diaphragm."

His Lordship having found the required spot (some people that I know could not) and slapped it, the Aberford made a circular spring and listened eagerly at his shoulder-blade; the result of this scientific pantomime seemed to be satisfactory, for he exclaimed, not to say bawled: —

"Hallo! here is a Viscount as sound as a roach! Now, young gentleman," added he; "your organs are superb, yet you are really out of sorts; it follows you have the maladies of idle minds, love, perhaps, among the rest; you blush, a diagnostic of that disorder; make your mind easy, cutaneous disorders, such as love, &c., shall never kill a patient of mine with a stomach like yours: so, now to cure you!" And away went the spherical Doctor, with his hands behind him, not up and down the room, but slanting and tacking, like a knight on a chess-board. He had not made many steps before, turning his upper globule, without affecting his lower, he hurled back, in a cold business-like tone, the following interrogatory: —

"What are your vices?"

"Saunders," inquired the patient, "which are my vices?"

"M' Lord, Lordship has n't any vices," replied Saunders, with dull, matter-of-fact solemnity.

"Lady Barbara makes the same complaint," thought Lord Ipsden.

"It seems I have not any vices, Dr. Aberford," said he, demurely.

"That is bad; nothing to get hold of. What interests you, then?"

"I don't remember."

"What amuses you?"

"I forget."

"What! no winning horse to gallop away your rents?"

"No, sir!"

"No Opera Girl to run her foot and ankle through your purse?"

"No, sir! and I think their ankles are not what they were."

"Stuff! just the same, from their ankles up to their ears, and down again to their morals; it is your eyes that are sunk deeper into your head. Hum! no horses, no vices, no dancers, no yacht; you confound one's notions of nobility, and I ought to know them, for I have to patch them all up a bit just before they go to the deuce."

"But I have, Doctor Aberford."

"What!"

"A yacht! and a clipper she is too."

"Ah! — (Now I've got him.)"

"In the Bay of Biscay she lay half a point nearer the wind than Lord Heavyjib."

"Oh! bother Lord Heavyjib, and his Bay of Biscay."

"With all my heart, they have often bothered me."

"Send her round to Granton Pier, in the Firth of Forth."

"I will, sir."

"And write down this prescription." And away he walked again, thinking the prescription.

"Saunders," appealed his master.

"Saunders be hanged."

"Sir!" said Saunders, with dignity, "I thank you."

"Don't thank me, thank your own deserts," replied the modern Chesterfield. "Oblige me by writing it yourself, my Lord, it is all the bodily exercise you will have had to-day, no doubt."

The young Viscount bowed, seated himself at a desk, and wrote from dictation: —

"Dr. Aberford's Prescription.

"Make acquaintance with all the people of low estate who have time to be bothered with you; learn their ways, their minds, and, above all, their troubles."

"Won't all this bore me?" suggested the writer.

"You will see. Relieve one fellow-creature every day, and let Mr. Saunders book the circumstances."

"I shall like this part," said the patient, laying down his pen. "How clever of you to think of such things; may not I do two sometimes?"

"Certainly not; one pill per day. — Write, Fish the herring! (that beats deer-stalking.) Run your nose into adventures at sea; live on tenpence, and earn it. Is it down?"

"Yes, it is down, but Saunders would have written it better."

"If he had n't he ought to be hanged," said the Aberford, inspecting the work. "I'm off, where's my hat? oh, there, where's my money? oh, here. Now look here, follow my prescription, and

You will soon have Mens sana in corpore sano;
And not care whether the girls say yes or say no;

neglect it, and — my gloves; oh, in my pocket — you will be *blasé* and *ennuyé*, and (an English participle, that means something as bad); God bless you!"

And out he scuttled, glided after by Saunders, for whom he opened and shut the street door.

Never was a greater effect produced by a doctor's visit; patient and physician were made for each other. Dr. Aberford was the specific for Lord Ipsden. He came to him like a shower to a fainting strawberry.

Saunders, on his return, found his Lord pacing the apartment.

"Saunders," said he, smartly, "send down to Gravesend, and order the yacht to this place, — what is it?"

"Granton Pier. Yes, my Lord."

"And, Saunders, take clothes, and books, and violins, and telescopes, and things — and me — to Euston Square, in an hour."

"Impossible, my Lord, cried Saun-

ders, in dismay. "And there is no train for hours."

His master replied with a hundred-pound note, and a quiet, but wickedish look; and the prince of gentlemen's gentleman had all the required items with him, in a special train, within the specified time, and away they flashed, northwards.

CHAPTER II.

It is said that opposite characters make a union happiest; and perhaps Lord Ipsden, diffident of himself, felt the value to him of a creature so different as Lady Barbara Sinclair; but the lady, for her part, was not so diffident of herself, nor was she in search of her opposite; on the contrary, she was waiting patiently to find just such a man as she was, or fancied herself, a woman.

Accustomed to measure men by their characters alone, and to treat with sublime contempt the accidents of birth and fortune, she had been a little staggered by the assurance of this butterfly that had proposed to settle upon her hand — for life.

In a word, the beautiful writer of the fatal note was honestly romantic, according to the romance of 1848, and of good society; of course she was not affected by hair tumbling back or plastered down forwards, and a rolling eye went no further with her than a squinting one.

Her romance was stern, not sickly. She was on the lookout for iron virtues; she had sworn to be wooed with great deeds, or never won; on this subject she had thought much, though not enough to ask herself whether great deeds are always to be got at, however disposed a lover may be.

No matter; she kept herself in reserve for some earnest man, who was not to come flattering and fooling to her, but look another way and do exploits.

She liked Lord Ipsden, her cousin once removed, but despised him for being agreeable, handsome, clever, and nobody.

She was also a little bitten with what she and others called the Middle Ages, in fact with that picture of them which Grub Street, imposing on the simplicity of youth, had got up for sale by arraying painted glass, gilt rags, and fancy, against fact.

With these vague and sketchy notices we are compelled to part, for the present, with Lady Barbara: but it serves her right; she has gone to establish her court in Perthshire, and left her rejected lover on our hands.

Journeys of a few hundred miles are no longer described.

You exchange a dead chair for a living chair, Saunders puts in your hand a new tale like this; you mourn the superstition of booksellers, which still inflicts uncut leaves upon humanity, though tailors do not send home coats with the sleeves stitched up, nor chambermaids put travellers into apple-pie beds as well as damp sheets. You rend and read, and are at Edinburgh, fatigued more or less, but not by the journey.

Lord Ipsden was, therefore, soon installed by the Firth side, full of the Aberford.

The young nobleman not only venerated the Doctor's sagacity, but half admired his brusquerie and bustle; things of which he was himself never guilty.

As for the prescription, that was a Delphic Oracle. Worlds could not have tempted him to deviate from a letter in it.

He waited with impatience for the yacht; and, meantime, it struck him that the first part of the prescription could be attacked at once.

It was the afternoon of the day succeeding his arrival. The Fifeshire hills, seen across the Firth from his windows, were beginning to take their charming violet tinge, a light breeze ruffled the blue water into a sparkling smile, the shore was tranquil, and the sea full of noiseless life, with the craft

of all sizes gliding and dancing and courtesying on their trackless roads.

The air was tepid, pure, and sweet as heaven; this bright afternoon, Nature had grudged nothing that could give fresh life and hope to such dwellers in dust and smoke and vice as were there to look awhile on her clean face and drink her honeyed breath.

This young gentleman was not insensible to the beauty of the scene. He was a little lazy by nature, and made lazier by the misfortune of wealth, but he had sensibilities; he was an artist of great natural talent; had he only been without a penny, how he would have handled the brush! And then he was a mighty sailor; if he had sailed for biscuit a few years, how he would have handled a ship!

As he was, he had the eye of a hawk for Nature's beauties, and the sea always came back to him like a friend after an absence.

This scene, then, curled round his heart a little, and he felt the good physician was wiser than the tribe that go by that name, and strive to build health on the sandy foundation of drugs.

"Saunders! do you know what Dr. Aberford means by the lower classes?"

"Perfectly, my Lord."

"Are there any about here?"

"I am sorry to say they are everywhere, my Lord."

"Get me some" — (*cigarette*).

Out went Saunders, with his usual graceful *empressement*, but an internal shrug of his shoulders.

He was absent an hour and a half; he then returned with a double expression on his face, — pride at his success in diving to the very bottom of society, and contempt of what he had fished up thence.

He approached his Lord mysteriously, and said, *sotto voce*, but impressively, "This is low enough, my Lord." Then glided back, and ushered in, with polite disdain, two lovelier women than he had ever opened a door to in the whole course of his perfumed existence.

On their heads they wore caps of Dutch or Flemish origin, with a broad lace border, stiffened and arched over the forehead, about three inches high, leaving the brow and cheeks unencumbered.

They had cotton jackets, bright red and yellow, mixed in patterns, confined at the waist by the apron-strings, but bobtailed below the waist; short woollen petticoats, with broad vertical stripes, red and white, most vivid in color; white worsted stockings, and neat, though high-quartered shoes. Under their jackets they wore a thick spotted cotton handkerchief, about one inch of which was visible round the lower part of the throat.

Of their petticoats, the outer one was kilted, or gathered up towards the front, and the second, of the same color, hung in the usual way.

Of these young women, one had an olive complexion, with the red blood mantling under it, and black hair, and glorious black eyebrows.

The other was fair, with a massive but shapely throat, as white as milk; glossy brown hair, the loose threads of which glittered like gold, and a blue eye, which, being contrasted with dark eyebrows and lashes, took the luminous effect peculiar to that rare beauty.

Their short petticoats revealed a neat ankle, and a leg with a noble swell; for Nature, when she is in earnest, builds beauty on the ideas of ancient sculptors and poets, not of modern poetasters, who, with their airy-like sylphs and their smoke-like verses, fight for want of flesh in woman and want of fact in poetry as parallel beauties.

They are, my lads. — *Continuez!*

These women had a grand corporeal trait; they had never known a corset! so they were straight as javelins; they could lift their hands above their heads! — actually! Their supple persons moved as Nature in-

tended; every gesture was ease, grace, and freedom.

What with their own radiance, and the snowy cleanliness and brightness of their costume, they came like meteors into the apartment.

Lord Ipsden, rising gently from his seat, with the same quiet politeness with which he would have received two princes of the blood, said, "How do you do?" and smiled a welcome.

"Fine! hoow 's yoursel?" answered the dark lass, whose name was Jean Carnie, and whose voice was not so sweet as her face.

"What'n lord are ye?" continued she; "are you a juke? I wad like fine to hae a crack wi' a juke."

Saunders, who knew himself the cause of this question, replied, *sotto voce*, "His Lordship is a viscount."

"I didna ken't," was Jean's remark. "But it has a bonny soond."

"What mair would ye hae?" said the fair beauty, whose name was Christie Johnstone. Then, appealing to his Lordship as the likeliest to know, she added, "Nobeelity is just a soond itsel, I 'm tauld."

The Viscount, finding himself expected to say something on a topic he had not attended much to, answered dryly: "We must ask the republicans, they are the people that give their minds to such subjects."

"And yon man," asked Jean Carnie, "is he a lord, too?"

"I am his Lordship's servant," replied Saunders, gravely, not without a secret misgiving whether fate had been just.

"Na!" replied she, not to be imposed upon, "ye are statelier and prooder than this ane."

"I will explain," said his master. "Saunders knows his value; a servant like Saunders is rarer than an idle viscount."

"My Lord, my Lord!" remonstrated Saunders, with a shocked and most disclamatory tone. "Rather!" was his inward reflection.

"Jean," said Christie, "ye hae muckle to laern. Are ye for herrin' the day, Vile Count?"

"No! are you for this sort of thing?"

At this, Saunders, with a world of *empressement*, offered the Carnie some cake that was on the table.

She took a piece, instantly spat it out into her hand, and with more energy than delicacy flung it into the fire.

"Augh!" cried she, "just a sugar and saut butter thegither; buy nae mair at yon shoep, Vile Count."

"Try this, out of Nature's shop," laughed their entertainer; and he offered them, himself, some peaches and things.

"Hech! a medi—cine!" said Christie.

"Nature, my lad," said Miss Carnie, making her ivory teeth meet in their first nectarine, "I didna ken whaur ye stoep, but ye beat the other confectioners, that div ye."

The fair lass, who had watched the Viscount all this time as demurely as a cat cream, now approached him.

This young woman was the thinker; her voice was also rich, full, and melodious, and her manner very engaging; it was half advancing, half retiring, not easy to resist or to describe.

"Noo," said she, with a very slight blush stealing across her face, "ye maun let me catecheeze ye, wull ye?"

The last two words were said in a way that would have induced a bear to reveal his winter residence.

He smiled assent. Saunders retired to the door, and, excluding every shade of curiosity from his face, took an attitude, half majesty, half obsequiousness.

Christie stood by Lord Ipsden, with one hand on her hip (the knuckles downwards), but graceful as Antinous, and began.

"Hoo muckle is the Queen greater than y' are?"

His Lordship was obliged to reflect.

"Let me see, — as is the moon to

a wax taper, so is her Majesty the Queen to you and me, and the rest."

"An' whaur does the Juke * come in?"

"On this particular occasion, the Duke† makes one of us, my pretty maid."

"I see! Are na ye awfu' prood o' being a Lorrd?"

"What an idea!"

"His Lordship did not go to bed a spinning-jenny, and rise up a lord, like some of them," put in Saunders.

"Saunders," said the peer, doubtfully, "eloquence rather bores people."

"Then I must n't speak again, my Lord," said Saunders, respectfully.

"Noo," said the fair inquisitor, "ye shall tell me how ye came to be Lorrds, your faemily?"

"Saunders!"

"Na! ye mauna flee to Sandy for a thing, ye are no a bairn, are ye?"

Here was a dilemma, the Saunders prop knocked rudely away, and obliged to think for ourselves.

But Saunders would come to his distressed master's assistance. He furtively conveyed to him a plump book, — this was Saunders's manual of faith; the author was Mr. Burke, not Edmund.

Lord Ipsden ran hastily over the page, closed the book, and said, "Here is the story.

"Five hundred years ago —"

"Listen, Jean," said Christie; "we 're gaun to get a boeny story. 'Five hundre' years ago,'" added she, with interest and awe.

"Was a great battle," resumed the narrator, in cheerful tones, as one larking with history, "between a King of England and his rebels. He was in the thick of the fight —"

"That 's the King, Jean, he was in the thick o't."

"My ancestor killed a fellow who was sneaking behind him, but the next moment a man-at-arms prepared a thrust at his majesty, who had his hands full with three assailants."

* Buccleuch. † Wellington.

"Eh! that 's no fair," said Christie, "as sure as deeth."

"My ancestor dashed forward, and, as the king's sword passed through one of them, he clove another to the waist with a blow."

"Weel done! weel done!"

Lord Ipsden looked at the speaker, her eyes were glittering, and her cheek flushing.

"Good Heavens!" thought he; "she believes it!" So he began to take more pains with his legend.

"But for the spearsman," continued he, "he had nothing but his body; he gave it, it was his duty, and received the death levelled at his sovereign."

"Hech! puir mon." And the glowing eyes began to glisten.

"The battle flowed another way, and God gave victory to the right; but the king came back to look for him, for it was no common service."

"Deed no!"

Here Lord Ipsden began to turn his eye inwards, and call up the scene. He lowered his voice.

"They found him lying on his back, looking death in the face.

"The nobles, by the King's side, uncovered as soon as he was found, for they were brave men, too. There was a moment's silence; eyes met eyes, and said, this is a stout soldier's last battle.

"The King could not bid him live."

"Na! lad, King Deeth has ower strong a grrip."

"But he did what Kings can do, he gave him two blows with his royal sword."

"O, the robber, and him a deeing mon."

"Two words from his royal mouth, and he and we were Barons of Ipsden and Hawthorn Glen from that day to this."

"But the puir dying creature?"

"What poor dying creature?"

"Your Forbear, lad."

"I don't know why you call him poor, madam; all the men of that

day are dust; they are the gold dust who died with honor.

"He looked round, uneasily, for his son, — for he had but one, — and when that son knelt, unwounded, by him, he said, 'Good night, Baron Ipsden'; and so he died, fire in his eye, a smile on his lip, and honor on his name forever. I meant to tell you a lie, and I've told you the truth."

"Laddie," said Christie, half admiringly, half reproachfully, "ye gar the tear come in my een. Hech! look at yon lassie! how could you think t' eat plums through siccan a bonny story?"

"Hets," answered Jean, who had, in fact, cleared the plate, "I aye listen best when my ain mooth 's stappit."

"But see, now," pondered Christie, "twa words fra a King, — thir titles are just breeth."

"Of course," was the answer. "All titles are. What is popularity? ask Aristides and Lamartine: the breath of a mob, — smells of its source, — and is gone before the sun can set on it. Now the royal breath does smell of the Rose and Crown, and stays by us from age to age."

The story had warmed our marble acquaintance. Saunders opened his eyes, and thought, "We shall wake up the House of Lords some evening, — *we* shall."

His Lordship then added, less warmly, looking at the girls: —

"I think I should like to be a fisherman." So saying, my Lord yawned slightly.

To this aspiration the young fishwives deigned no attention, doubting, perhaps, its sincerity; and Christie, with a shade of severity, inquired of him how he came to be a Vile Count.

"A baron 's no' a Vile Count, I 'm sure," said she; "sae tell me how ye came to be a Vile Count."

"Ah!" said he, "that is by no means a pretty story like the other; you will not like it, I am sure."

"Ay, will I, — ay, will I; I 'm aye seeking knoewledge."

"Well, it is soon told. One of us sat twenty years on one seat, in the same house, so one day he got up a — Viscount."

"Ower muckle pay for ower little wark."

"Now don't say that; I would n't do it to be Emperor of Russia."

"Aweel, I hae gotten a heap out o' ye; sae noow I 'll gang, since ye are no for herrin'; come away, Jean."

At this their host remonstrated, and inquired why bores are at one's service night and day, and bright people are always in a hurry; he was informed in reply, "Labor is the lot o' man. Div ye no ken that muckle? And abune a' o' women."*

"Why, what can two such pretty creatures have to do except to be admired?"

This question coming within the dark beauty's scope, she hastened to reply.

"To sell our herrin', — we hae three hundre' left in the creel."

"What is the price?"

At this question the poetry died out of Christie Johnstone's face, she gave her companion a rapid look, indiscernible by male eye, and answered: —

"Three a penny, sirr; they are no plenty the day," added she, in smooth tones that carried conviction.

(Little liar; they were selling six a penny everywhere.)

"Saunders, buy them all, and be ever so long about it; count them, or some nonsense."

"He 's daft! he 's daft! O, ye ken, Jean, an Ennglishman and a lorrd, twa daft things thegither, he could na' miss the road. Coont them, lassie."

"Come away, Sandy, till I count them till ye," said Jean.

Saunders and Jean disappeared.

Business being out of sight, curiosity revived.

"An' what brings ye here from

* A local idea, I suspect. — C. R.

London, if ye please?" recommenced the fair inquisitor.

"You have a good countenance; there is something in your face. I could find it in my heart to tell you, but I should bore you."

"De'el a fear! Bore me, bore me! whaat's thaat, I wonder?"

"What is your name, madam? Mine is Ipsden."

"They ca' me Christie Johnstone."

"Well, Christie Johnstone, I am under the doctor's hands."

"Puir lad. What 's the trouble?" (solemnly and tenderly.)

"Ennui!" (rather piteously.)

"Yawn-we? I never heerd tell o't."

"O you lucky girl," burst out he; "but the doctor has undertaken to cure me; in one thing you could assist me, if I am not presuming too far on our short acquaintance. I am to relieve one poor distressed person every day, but I must n't do two: is not that a bore?"

"Gie 's your hand, gie 's your hand. I 'm vexed for ca'ing you daft. Hech! what a saft hand ye hae. Jean, I 'm saying, come here, feel this."

Jean, who had run in, took the Viscount's hand from Christie.

"It never wroucht any," explained Jean.

"And he has bonny hair," said Christie, just touching his locks on the other side.

"He 's a bonny lad," said Jean, inspecting him scientifically, and point-blank.

"Ay, is he," said the other. "Aweel, there 's Jess Rutherford, a widdy, wi' four bairns, ye meicht do waur than ware your siller on her."

"Five pounds to begin?" inquired his Lordship.

"Five pund! Are ye made o' siller? Ten schell'n!"

Saunders was rung for, and produced a one-pound note.

"The herrin' is five and saxpence; it 's four and saxpence I 'm awin ye," said the young fishwife, "and Jess will be a glad woman the neicht."

The settlement was effected, and away went the two friends, saying:—

"Good boye, Vile Count."

Their host fell into thought.

"When have I talked so much?" asked he of himself.

"Dr. Aberford, you are a wonderful man; I like your lower classes amazingly."

"Méfiez vous, Monsieur Ipsden!" should some mentor have said.

As the Devil puts into a beginner's hands ace, queen, five trumps, to give him a taste for whist, so these lower classes have perhaps put forward one of their best cards to lead you into a false estimate of the strength of their hand.

Instead, however, of this, who should return, to disturb the equilibrium of truth, but this Christina Johnstone? She came thoughtfully in, and said:—

"I 've been taking a thoucht, and this is no what yon gude physeecian meaned; ye are no to fling your chaerity like a bane till a doeg; ye 'll gang yoursel to Jess Rutherford; Flucker Johnstone, that 's my brother, will convoy ye."

"But how is your brother to know me?"

"How? Because I 'll gie him a sair sair hiding, if he lets ye gang by."

Then she returned the one-pound note, a fresh settlement was effected, and she left him.

At the door she said: "And I am muckle obleeged to ye for your story and your goodness."

Whilst uttering these words, she half kissed her hand to him, with a lofty and disengaged gesture, such as one might expect from a queen, if queens did not wear stays; and was gone.

When his Lordship, a few minutes after, sauntered out for a stroll, the first object he beheld was an exact human square, a handsome boy, with a body swelled out apparently to the size of a man's, with blue flannel, and blue cloth above it, leaning against a

wall, with his hands in his pockets, — a statuette of *insouciance*.

This marine puff-ball was Flucker Johnstone, aged fourteen.

Stain his sister's face with diluted walnut-juice, as they make the stage gypsy and Red Indian (two animals imagined by actors to be one), and you have Flucker's face.

A slight moral distinction remains, not to be so easily got over.

She was the best girl in the place, and he a baddish boy.

He was, however, as sharp in his way as she was intelligent in hers.

This youthful mariner allowed his Lordship to pass him, and take twenty steps, but watched him all the time, and compared him with a description furnished him by his sister.

He then followed, and brought him to, as he called it.

"I daur say it 's you I 'm to convoy to yon auld faggitt!" said this baddish boy.

On they went, Flucker rolling and pitching and yawing to keep up with the lordly galley, for a fisherman's natural waddle is two miles an hour.

At the very entrance of Newhaven, the new pilot suddenly sung out, "Starboard!"

Starboard it was, and they ascended a filthy "close," or alley; they mounted a staircase which was out of doors, and, without knocking, Flucker introduced himself into Jess Rutherford's house.

"Here a gentleman to speak till ye, wife."

CHAPTER III.

The widow was weather-beaten and rough. She sat mending an old net.

"The gentleman 's welcome," said she; but there was no gratification in her tone, and but little surprise.

His Lordship then explained that, understanding there were worthy people in distress, he was in hopes he might be permitted to assist them, and that she must blame a neighbor of hers if he had broken in upon her too abruptly with this object. He then, with a blush, hinted at ten shillings, which he begged she would consider as merely an instalment, until he could learn the precise nature of her embarrassments, and the best way of placing means at her disposal.

The widow heard all this with a lack-lustre mind.

For many years her life had been unsuccessful labor; if anything had ever come to her, it had always been a misfortune; her incidents had been thorns, — her events, daggers.

She could not realize a human angel coming to her relief, and she did not realize it, and she worked away at her net.

At this, Flucker, to whom his Lordship's speech appeared monstrously weak and pointless, drew nigh, and gave the widow, in her ear, his version, namely, his sister's embellished. It was briefly this: That the gentleman was a daft lord from England, who had come with the bank in his breeks, to remove poverty from Scotland, beginning with her. "Sae speak loud aneuch, and ye 'll no want siller," was his polite corollary.

His Lordship rose, laid a card on a chair, begged her to make use of him, et cetera; he then, recalling the oracular prescription, said, "Do me the favor to apply to me for any little sum you have a use for, and, in return, I will beg of you (if it does not bore you too much) to make me acquainted with any little troubles you may have encountered in the course of your life."

His Lordship, receiving no answer, was about to go, after bowing to her, and smiling gracefully upon her.

His hand was on the latch, when Jess Rutherford burst into a passion of tears.

He turned with surprise.

"*My troubles*, laddie," cried she, trembling all over. "The sun wad set, and rise, and set again, ere I could

tell ye a' the trouble I hae come through.

"O, ye need na vex yourself for an auld wife's tears; tears are a blessin', lad, I shall assure ye. Mony 's the time I hae prayed for them, and could na hae them. Sit ye doon! sit ye doon! I 'll no let ye gang fra my door till I hae thankit ye, — but gie me time, gie me time. I canna greet a' the days of the week."

Flucker, *ætat.* 14, opened his eyes, unable to connect ten shillings and tears.

Lord Ipsden sat down, and felt very sorry for her.

And she cried at her ease.

If one touch of nature make the whole world kin, methinks that sweet and wonderful thing, sympathy, is not less powerful. What frozen barriers, what ice of centuries, it can melt in a moment!

His bare mention of her troubles had surprised the widowed woman's heart, and now she looked up, and examined his countenance; it was soon done.

A woman, young or old, high or low, can discern and appreciate sensibility in a man's face, at a single glance.

What she saw there was enough. She was sure of sympathy. She recalled her resolve, and the tale of her sorrows burst from her, like a flood.

Then the old fishwife told the young aristocrat how she had borne twelve children, and buried six as bairns; how her man was always unlucky; how a mast fell on him, and disabled him a whole season; how they could but just keep the pot boiling by the deep-sea fishing, and he was not allowed to dredge for oysters, because his father was not a Newhaven man. How, when the herring fishing came, to make all right, he never had another man's luck; how his boat's crew would draw empty nets, and a boat alongside him would be gunwale down in the water with the fish. How, at last, one morning, the 20th day of November, his boat came in to Newhaven Pier without him, and when he was inquired for, his crew said, "He had stayed at home, like a lazy loon, and not sailed with them the night before." How she was anxious, and had all the public-houses searched, "For he took a drop now and then, nae wonder, and him aye in the weather." Poor thing! when he was alive she used to call him a drunken scoundrel to his face. How, when the tide went down, a mad wife, whose husband had been drowned twenty years ago, pointed out something under the pier, that the rest took for sea-weed floating, — how it was the hair of her man's head, washed about by the water, and he was there, drowned without a cry or a struggle, by his enormous boots, that kept him in an upright position, though he was dead; there he stood, — dead, — drowned by slipping from the slippery pier, close to his comrades' hands, in a dark and gusty night; how her daughter married, and was well to do, and assisted her; how she fell into a rapid decline, and died, a picture of health to inexperienced eyes. How she, the mother, saw and knew, and watched the treacherous advance of disease and death; how others said gayly, "Her daughter was better," and she was obliged to say, "Yes." How she had worked, eighteen hours a day, at making nets; how, when she let out her nets to the other men at the herring fishing, they always cheated her, because her man was gone. How she had many times had to choose between begging her meal and going to bed without it, but, thank Heaven! she had always chosen the latter.

She told him of hunger, cold, and anguish. As she spoke they became real things to him; up to that moment they had been things in a storybook. And as she spoke she rocked herself from side to side.

Indeed, she was a woman "acquainted with grief." She might have said, "Here I and sorrow sit!

This is my throne, bid kings come and bow to it!"

Her hearer felt this, and therefore this woman, poor, old, and ugly, became sacred in his eye; it was with a strange sort of respect that he tried to console her.

He spoke to her in tones gentle and sweet as the south wind on a summer evening.

"Madam," said he, "let me be so happy as to bring you some comfort. The sorrows of the heart I cannot heal; they are for a mightier hand; but a part of your distress appears to have been positive need; that we can at least dispose of, and I entreat you to believe that from this hour want shall never enter that door again. Never! upon my honor!"

The Scotch are icebergs, with volcanoes underneath; thaw the Scotch ice, which is very cold, and you shall get to the Scotch fire, warmer than any sun of Italy or Spain.

His Lordship had risen to go. The old wife had seemed absorbed in her own grief; she now dried her tears.

"Bide ye, sirr," said she, "till I thank ye."

So she began to thank him, rather coldly and stiffly.

"He says ye are a lord," said she; "I dinna ken, an' I dinna care; but ye 're a gentleman, I daur say, and a kind heart ye hae."

Then she began to warm.

"And ye 'll never be a grain the poorer for the siller ye hae gien me; for he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

Then she began to glow.

"But it 's no your siller; dinna think it,—na, lad, na! O, fine! I ken there 's mony a supper for the bairns and me in yon bits metal; but I canna feel your siller as I feel your winsome smile,—the drop in your young een,—an' the sweet words ye gied me, in the sweet music o' your Soothern tongue, Gude bless ye!" (Where was her ice by this time?) "Gude bless ye! and I bless ye!"

And she did bless him; and what a blessing it was; not a melodious generality, like a stage parent's, or papa's in a damsel's novel. It was like the son of Barak on Zophim.

She blessed him, as one who had the power and the right to bless or curse.

She stood on the high ground of her low estate, and her afflictions,—and demanded of their Creator to bless the fellow-creature that had come to her aid and consolation.

This woman had suffered to the limits of endurance; yesterday she had said, "Surely the Almighty does na *see* me a' these years!"

So now she blessed him, and her heart's blood seemed to gush into words.

She blessed him by land and water.

She knew most mortal griefs; for she had felt them.

She warned them away from him one by one.

She knew the joys of life; for she had felt their want.

She summoned them one by one to his side.

"And a fair wind to your ship," cried she: "an' the storms aye ten miles to leeward o' her."

Many happy days, "an' weel spent," she wished him.

"His love should love him dearly, or a better take her place."

"Health to his side by day; sleep to his pillow by night."

A thousand good wishes came, like a torrent of fire, from her lips, with a power that eclipsed his dreams of human eloquence; and then, changing in a moment from the thunder of a Pythoness to the tender music of some poetess mother, she ended:—

"An' O my boenny, boenny lad, may ye be wi' the rich upon the airth a' your days,—AND WI' THE PUIR IN THE WARLD TO COME!"

His Lordship's tongue refused him the thin phrases of society.

"Farewell for the present," said he, and he went quietly away.

He paced thoughtfully home.

He had drunk a fact with every sentence; and an idea with every fact.

For the knowledge we have never realized is not knowledge to us, — only knowledge's shadow.

With the banished Duke, he now began to feel, "we are not alone unhappy": this universal world contains other guess sorrows than yours, Viscount, — *scilicet* than unvarying health, unbroken leisure, and incalculable income.

Then this woman's eloquence! bless me! he had seen folk murmur politely in the Upper House, and drone or hammer away at the Speaker down below, with more heat than warmth.

He had seen nine hundred wild beasts fed with peppered tongue, in a menagerie called *L'Assemblée Nationale.*

His ears had rung often enough, for that matter.

This time his heart beat.

He had been in the principal Courts of Europe: knew what a handful of gentlefolks call "the World": had experienced the honeyed words of courtiers; the misty nothings of diplomatists; and the innocent prattle of mighty kings.

But hitherto he seemed to have undergone gibberish and jargon: —

Gibberish and jargon — Political!

Gibberish and jargon — Social!

Gibberish and jargon — Theological!

Gibberish and jargon — Positive!

People had been prating — Jess had spoken.

But, it is to be observed, he was under the double effect of eloquence and novelty; and, so situated, we overrate things, you know.

That night he made a provision for this poor woman, in case he should die before next week.

"Who knows?" said he, "she is such an unlucky woman."

Then he went to bed, and whether from the widow's blessing, or the air of the place, he slept like a ploughboy.

Leaving Richard, Lord Ipsden, to work out the Aberford problem, — to relieve poor people, one or two of whom, like the Rutherford, were grateful, the rest acted it to the life, — to receive now and then a visit from Christina Johnstone, who borrowed every mortal book in his house, who sold him fish, invariably cheated him by the indelible force of habit, and then remorsefully undid the bargain, with a peevish entreaty that "he would not be so green, for there was no doing business with him," — to be fastened upon by Flucker, who, with admirable smoothness and cunning, wormed himself into a cabin-boy on board the yacht, and man-at-arms ashore.

To cruise in search of adventures, and meet nothing but disappointments; to acquire a browner tint, a lighter step, and a jacket, our story moves for a while towards humbler personages.

CHAPTER IV.

Jess Rutherford, widow of Alexander Johnstone, for Newhaven wives, like great artists, change their conditions without changing their names, was known in the town only as a dour wife, a sour old carline. Whose fault?

Do wooden faces and iron tongues tempt sorrow to put out its snails' horns?

She hardly spoke to any one, or any one to her, but four days after the visit we have described people began to bend looks of sympathy on her, to step out of their way to give her a kindly good-morrow; after a bit, fish and meal used to be placed on her table by one neighbor or another, when she was out: and so on. She was at first behind-hand in responding to all this, but by degrees she thawed to those who were thawing to her. Next, Saunders called on her, and showed her a settlement, made for her benefit, on certain lands in

Lanarkshire. She was at ease for life.

The Almighty had seen her all these years.

But how came her neighbors to melt?

Because a nobleman had visited her.

Not exactly, dear novel-reader.

This was it.

That same night, by a bright fire lighting up snowy walls, burnished copper, gleaming candlesticks, and a dinner-table floor, sat the mistress of the house, Christie Johnstone, and her brother, Flucker.

She with a book, he with his reflections opposite her.

"Lassie, hae ye ony siller past ye?"

"Ay, lad; an' I mean to keep it!"

The baddish boy had registered a vow to the contrary, and proceeded to bleed his flint (for to do Christie justice the process was not very dissimilar). Flucker had a versatile genius for making money; he had made it in forty different ways, by land and sea, tenpence at a time.

"I hae gotten the life o' Jess Rutherford, till ye," said he.

"Giest then."

"I'm seeking half a crown for 't," said he.

Now, he knew he should never get half a crown, but he also knew that if he asked a shilling, he should be beaten down to fourpence.

So half a crown was his first bode.

The enemy, with anger at her heart, called up a humorous smile, and saying, "An ye 'll get saxpence," went about some household matter; in reality, to let her proposal rankle in Flucker.

Flucker lighted his pipe slowly, as one who would not do a sister the injustice to notice so trivial a proposition.

He waited fresh overtures.

They did not come.

Christie resumed her book.

Then the baddish boy fixed his eye on the fire, and said softly and thoughtfully to the fire, "Hech, what a heap o' troubles yon woman has come through."

This stroke of art was not lost. Christie looked up from her book; pretended he had spoken to her, gave a fictitious yawn, and renewed the negotiation with the air of one disposed to kill time.

She was dying for the story.

Commerce was twice broken off and renewed by each power in turn.

At last the bargain was struck at fourteen-pence.

Then Flucker came out, the honest merchant.

He had listened intently, with mercantile views.

He had the widow's sorrows all off pat.

He was not a bit affected himself, but by pure memory he remembered where she had been most agitated or overcome.

He gave it Christie, word for word, and even threw in what dramatists call "the business," thus: —

"Here ye suld greet — "

"Here ye 'll play your hand like a geraffe."

"Geraffe? That 's a beast, I 'm thinking."

"Na; it 's the thing on the hill that makes signals."

"Telegraph, ye fulish goloshen!"

"Oo ay, telegraph! Geraffe 's sunest said for a'."

Thus Jess Rutherford's life came into Christie Johnstone's hands.

She told it to a knot of natives next day; it lost nothing, for she was a woman of feeling, and by intuition an artist of the tongue. She was the best *raconteur* in a place where there are a hundred, male and female, who attempt that art.

The next day she told it again, and then inferior narrators got hold of it, and it soon circulated through the town.

And this was the cause of the sudden sympathy with Jess Rutherford.

As our prigs would say: —

"Art had adopted her cause and adorned her tale."

CHAPTER V.

The fishing village of Newhaven is an unique place; it is a colony that retains distinct features; the people seldom intermarry with their Scotch neighbors.

Some say the colony is Dutch, some Danish, some Flemish. The character and cleanliness of their female costume points rather to the latter.

Fish, like horse-flesh, corrupts the mind and manners.

After a certain age, the Newhaven fishwife is always a blackguard, and ugly; but among the younger specimens, who have not traded too much, or come into much contact with larger towns, a charming modesty, or else slyness (such as no man can distinguish from it, so it answers every purpose), is to be found, combined with rare grace and beauty.

It is a race of women that the northern sun peachifies instead of rosewoodizing.

On Sundays the majority sacrifice appearance to fashion; these turn out rainbows of silk, satin, and lace. In the week they were all grace, and no stays; now they seem all stays and no grace. They never look so ill as when they change their "costume" for "dress."

The men are smart fishermen, distinguished from the other fishermen of the Firth chiefly by their "dredging song."

This old song is money to them; thus: —

Dredging is practically very stiff rowing for ten hours.

Now both the Newhaven men and their rivals are agreed that this song lifts them through more work than untuned fishermen can manage.

I have heard the song, and seen the work done to it; and incline to think it helps the oar, not only by keeping the time true, and the spirit alive, but also by its favorable action on the lungs. It is sung in a peculiar way: the sound is, as it were, expelled from the chest in a sort of musical ejaculations; and the like, we know, was done by the ancient gymnasts; and is done by the French bakers, in lifting their enormous dough, and by our paviors.

The song, in itself, does not contain above seventy stock verses, but these perennial lines are a nucleus, round which the men improvise the topics of the day, giving, I know not for what reason, the preference to such as verge upon indelicacy.

The men and women are musical and narrative; three out of four can sing a song or tell a story, and they omit few opportunities.

Males and females suck whiskey like milk, and are quarrelsome in proportion: the men fight (round-handed), the women fleicht or scold, in the form of a teapot, — the handle fixed and the spout sawing the air.

A singular custom prevails here.

The maidens have only one sweetheart apiece!!!

So the whole town is in pairs.

The courting is all done on Saturday night, by the lady's fire. It is hard to keep out of a groove in which all the town is running; and the Johnstone had possessed, as mere property, — a lad!

She was so wealthy that few of them could pretend to aspire to her, so she selected for her chattel a young man called Willy Liston; a youth of an unhappy turn, — he contributed nothing to hilarity, his face was a kill-joy, — nobody liked him; for this female reason Christie distinguished him.

He found a divine supper every Saturday night in her house; he ate, and sighed! Christie fed him, and laughed at him.

Flucker ditto.

As she neither fed nor laughed at any other man, some twenty were bitterly jealous of Willy Liston, and this gave the blighted youth a cheerful moment or two.

But the bright alliance received a check some months before our tale.

Christie was *heluo librorum!* and like others who have that taste, and can only gratify it in the interval of manual exercise, she read very intensely in her hours of study. A book absorbed her. She was like a leech on these occasions, *non missura cutem:* even Jean Carnie, her coadjutor or "neebor," as they call it, found it best to keep out of her way till the book was sucked.

One Saturday night Willy Liston's evil star ordained that a gentleman of French origin and Spanish dress, called Gil Blas, should be the Johnstone's companion.

Willy Liston arrived.

Christie, who had bolted the door, told him from the window, civilly enough, but decidedly, "She would excuse his company that night."

"Vara weel," said Willy, and departed.

Next Saturday, — no Willy came.

Ditto the next. Willy was waiting the *amende.*

Christie forgot to make it.

One day she was passing the boats, Willy beckoned her mysteriously; he led her to his boat, which was called "The Christie Johnstone"; by the boat's side was a paint pot and brush.

They had not supped together for five Saturdays.

Ergo, Mr. Liston had painted out the four first letters of "Christie," he now proceeded to paint out the fifth, giving her to understand, that, if she allowed the whole name to go, a letter every blank Saturday, her image would be gradually, but effectually, obliterated from the heart Listonian.

My reader has done what Liston did not, anticipate her answer. She recommended him, whilst his hand was in, to paint out the entire name, and, with white paint and a smaller brush, to substitute some other female appellation. So saying, she tripped off.

Mr. Liston on this was guilty of the following inconsistency; he pressed the paint carefully out of the brush into the pot: having thus economized his material, he hurled the pot which contained his economy at "the Johnstone," he then adjourned to the "Peacock," and "away at once with love and reason."

Thenceforth, when men asked who was Christie Johnstone's lad, the answer used to be, "She 's seeking ane." *Quelle horreur!!*

Newhaven does n't know everything, but my intelligent reader suspects, and, if confirming his suspicions can reconcile him to our facts, it will soon be done.

But he must come with us to Edinburgh; it 's only three miles.

CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE band of painters came into Edinburgh from a professional walk. Three were of Edinburgh: Groove, aged fifty; Jones and Hyacinth, young; the latter long-haired.

With them was a young Englishman, the leader of the expedition, — Charles Gatty.

His step was elastic, and his manner wonderfully animated, without loudness.

"A bright day," said he. "The sun forgot where he was, and shone; everything was in favor of art."

"O dear, no," replied old Groove, "not where I was."

"Why, what was the matter?"

"The flies kept buzzing and biting, and sticking in the work: that 's the worst of out o' doors!"

"The flies! is that all? Swear the spiders in special constables next time," cried Gatty. "We shall win the day"; and light shone into his hazel eye.

"The world will not always put up with the humbugs of the brush, who, to imitate Nature, turn their back on her. Paint an out o' door scene in doors! I swear by the sun it 's a lie! the one stupid, impudent lie, that glitters amongst the lies of vulgar art,

like Satan amongst Belial, Mammon, and all those beggars.

"Now look here; the barren outlines of a scene must be looked at, to be done; hence the sketching system slop-sellers of the Academy! but the million delicacies of light, shade, and color, can be trusted to memory, can they?

"It's a lie big enough to shake the earth out of her course; if any part of the work could be trusted to memory or imagination, it happens to be the bare outlines, and they can't. The million subtleties of light and color; learn them by heart, and say them off on canvas! the highest angel in the sky must have his eye upon them, and look devilish sharp, too, or he sha' n't paint them: I give him Charles Gatty's word for that."

"That's very eloquent, I call it," said Jones.

"Yes," said poor old Groove, "the lad will never make a painter."

"Yes, I shall, Groove; at least I hope so, but it must be a long time first."

"I never knew a painter who could talk and paint both," explained Mr. Groove.

"Very well," said Gatty. "Then I'll say but one word more, and it is this. The artifice of painting is old enough to die; it is time the art was born. Whenever it does come into the world, you will see no more dead corpses of trees, grass, and water, robbed of their life, the sunlight, and flung upon canvas in a studio, by the light of a cigar, and a lie — and—"

"How much do you expect for your picture?" interrupted Jones.

"What has that to do with it? With these little swords" (waving his brush), "we'll fight for nature-light, truth-light, and sunlight, against a world in arms, — no, worse, in swaddling clothes."

"With these little swerrds," replied poor old Groove, "we shall cut our own throats if we go against people's prejudices."

The young artist laughed the old daubster a merry defiance, and then separated from the party, for his lodgings were down the street.

He had not left them long, before a most musical voice was heard, crying: —

"A caallerr owoo!"

And two young fishwives hove in sight.

The boys recognized one of them as Gatty's sweetheart.

"Is he in love with her?" inquired Jones.

Hyacinth the long-haired undertook to reply.

"He loves her better than anything in the world, except Art. Love and Art are two beautiful things," whined Hyacinth.

"She, too, is beautiful. I have done her," added he, with a simper.

"In oil?" asked Groove.

"In oil? no, in verse, here"; and he took out a paper.

"Then had n't we better cut? you might propose reading them," said poor old Groove.

"Have you any oysters?" inquired Jones of the Carnie and the Johnstone, who were now alongside.

"Plenty," answered Jean. "Hae ye ony siller?"

The artists looked at one another, and did n't all speak at once.

"I, madam," said old Groove, insinuatingly, to Christie, "am a friend of Mr. Gatty's; perhaps, on that account, you would *lend* me an oyster or two."

"Na," said Jean, sternly.

"Hyacinth," said Jones, sarcastically, "give them your verses, perhaps that will soften them."

Hyacinth gave his verses, descriptive of herself, to Christie.

This youngster was one of those who mind other people's business.

Alienis studiis delectatus contempsit suum.

His destiny was to be a bad painter, so he wanted to be an execrable poet.

All this morning he had been doggrelling, when he ought to have been

daubing; and now he will have to sup off a colored print, if he sups at all.

Christie read, blushed, and put the verses in her bosom.

"Come awa, Custy," said Jean.

"Hets," said Christie, "gie the puir lads twarree oysters, what the waur will we be?"

So they opened oysters for them; and Hyacinth the long-haired looked down on the others with sarcastico-benignant superiority. He had conducted a sister art to the aid of his brother brushes.

"The poet's empire, all our hearts allow;
But doggrel's power was never known till now."

CHAPTER VII.

At the commencement of the last chapter, Charles Gatty, artist, was going to usher in a new state of things, true art, etc. Wales was to be painted in Wales, not Poland Street.

He and five or six more youngsters were to be in the foremost files of truth, and take the world by storm.

This was at two o'clock; it is now five; whereupon the posture of affairs, the prospects of art, the face of the world, the nature of things, are quite the reverse.

In the artist's room, on the floor, was a small child, whose movements, and they were many, were viewed with huge dissatisfaction by Charles Gatty, Esq. This personage, pencil in hand, sat slouching and morose, looking gloomily at his intractable model.

Things were going on very badly; he had been waiting two hours for an infantine pose as common as dirt, and the little viper would die first.

Out of doors everything was nothing, for the sun was obscured, and to all appearance extinguished forever.

"Ah! Mr. Groove," cried he, to that worthy, who peeped in at that moment; "you are right, it is better to plough away upon canvas blindfold, as our grandfathers — no, grandmothers — used, than to kill ourselves toiling after such coy ladies as Nature and Truth."

"Aweel, I dinna ken, sirr," replied Groove, in smooth tones. "I didna like to express my warm approbation of you before the lads, for fear of making them jealous."

"They be — No!"

"I ken what ye wad say, sirr, an it wad hae been a vara just an' sprightly observaation. Aweel, between oursels, I look upon ye as a young gentleman of amazing talent and mocdesty. Man, ye dinna do yoursel justice; ye should be in th' Academy, at the hede o' 't."

"Mr. Groove, I am a poor fainting pilgrim on the road, where stronger spirits have marched erect before me."

"A faintin' pelgrim! Deil a frights o' ye, ye 're a brisk and bonny lad. Ah, sirr, in my juvenile days, we didna fash wi nature, and truth, an the like."

"The like! What is like nature and truth, except themselves?"

"Vara true, sirr; vara true, and sae I doot I will never attain the height o' profeeciency ye hae reached. An' at this vara moment, sir," continued Groove, with delicious solemnity and mystery, "ye see before ye, sir, a man wha is in maist dismal want — o' ten shellen!" (A pause.) "If your superior talent has put ye in possession of that sum, ye would obleege me infinitely by a temporary accommodaation, Mr. Gaattie."

"Why did you not come to the point at once?" cried Gatty, brusquely, "instead of humbling me with undeserved praise. There." Groove held out his hand, but made a wry face when, instead of money, Gatty put a sketch into his hand.

"There," said Gatty, "that is a lie!"

"How can it be a lee?" said the other, with sour inadvertence. "How can it be a lee, when I hae na spoken?"

"You don't understand me. That

sketch is a libel on a poor cow and an unfortunate oak-tree. I did them at the Academy. They had never done me any wrong, poor things; they suffered unjustly. You take them to a shop, swear they are a tree and a cow, and some fool, that never really looked into a cow or a tree, will give you ten shillings for them."

"Are ye sure, lad?"

"I am sure. Mr. Groove, sir, if you cannot sell a lie for ten shillings, you are not fit to live in this world; where is the lie that will not sell for ten shillings?"

"I shall think the better o' lees all my days; sir, your words are inspeeriting." And away went Groove with the sketch.

Gatty reflected, and stopped him.

"On second thoughts, Groove, you must not ask ten shillings; you must ask twenty pounds for that rubbish."

"Twenty pund! What for will I seek twenty pund?"

"Simply because people that would not give you ten shillings for it will offer you eleven pounds for it if you ask twenty pounds."

"The fules," roared Groove. "Twenty pund! hem!" He looked closer into it. "For a'," said he, "I begin to obsairve it is a work of great merit. I'll seek twenty pund an' I'll no tak less than fifteen schelln, at present."

The visit of this routine painter did not cheer our artist.

The small child got a coal, and pounded the floor with it, like a machine incapable of fatigue. So the wished-for pose seemed more remote than ever.

The day waxed darker, instead of lighter; Mr. Gatty's reflections took also a still more sombre hue.

"Even Nature spites us," thought he, "because we love her.

"Then cant, tradition, numbers, slang, and money are against us; the least of these is singly a match for truth; we shall die of despair or paint cobwebs in Bedlam; and I am faint, weary of a hopeless struggle; and one man's brush is truer than mine, another's is bolder, — my hand and eye are not in tune. Ah! no! I shall never, never, never be a painter."

These last words broke audibly from him as his head went down almost to his knees.

A hand was placed on his shoulder as a flake of snow falls on the water. It was Christie Johnstone, radiant, who had glided in unobserved.

"What 's wrang wi' ye, my lad?"

"The sun is gone to the Devil, for one thing."

"Hech! hech! ye 'll no be long ahint him; div ye no think shame."

"And I want that little brute just to do so, and he 'd die first."

"O, ye villain, to ca' a bairn a brute; there 's but ae brute here, an' it 's no you, Jamie, nor me, — is it, my lamb?"

She then stepped to the window.

"It 's clear to windward; in ten minutes ye 'll hae plenty sun. Tak your tools noo." And at the word she knelt on the floor, whipped out a paper of sugar-plums, and said to him she had christened "Jamie": "Heh! Here 's sweeties till ye." Out went Jamie's arms, as if he had been a machine and she had pulled the right string.

"Ah, that will do," said Gatty, and sketched away.

Unfortunately Jamie was quickly arrested on the way to immortality by his mother, who came in, saying: —

"I maun hae my bairn, — he canna be aye wasting his time here."

This sally awakened the satire that ever lies ready in piscatory bosoms.

"Wasting his time! ye 're no blate. O, ye 'll be for taking him to the college to laern pheesick, — and teach maenners."

"Ye need na begin on me," said the woman, "I 'm no match for Newhaven."

So saying she cut short the dispute by carrying off the gristle of contention.

"Another enemy to art," said Gatty, hurling away his pencil.

The young fishwife inquired if there were any more griefs: what she had heard had not accounted, to her reason, for her companion's depression.

"Are ye sick, laddy?" said she.

"No, Christie, not sick, but quite, quite down in the mouth."

She scanned him thirty seconds.

"What had ye till your dinner?"

"I forget."

"A choep, likely?"

"I think it was."

"Or maybe it was a steak?"

"I dure say it was a steak."

"Taste my girdle cake, that I 've brought for ye."

She gave him a piece; he ate it rapidly, and looked gratefully at her.

"Noo, div ye no think shame to look me in the face? Ye hae na dined ava." And she wore an injured look.

"Sit ye there; it 's ower late for dinner, but ye'll get a cup tea: doon i' the mooth, nae wonder, when naething gangs doon your —"

In a minute she placed a tea-tray, and ran into the kitchen with a teapot.

The next moment a yell was heard, and she returned laughing, with another teapot.

"The wife had maskit her tea till hersel'," said this lawless forager.

Tea and cake on the table, — beauty seated by his side, — all in less than a minute.

He offered her a piece of cake.

"Na! I am no for any."

"Nor I then," said he.

"Hets! eat, I tell ye."

He replied by putting a bit to her heavenly mouth.

"Ye 're awfu' opinionated," said she, with a countenance that said nothing should induce her, and eating it almost contemporaneously.

"Put plenty sugar," added she, referring to the Chinese infusion; "mind, I hae a sweet tooth."

"You have a sweet set," said he, approaching another morsel.

They showed themselves by way of smile, and confirmed the accusation.

"Aha! lad," answered she; "they've been the death o' mony a herrin'!"

"Now, what does that mean in English, Christie?"

"My grinders — (a full stop.)

"Which you approve — (a full stop.)

"Have been fatal — (a full stop.)

"To many fishes!"

Christie prided herself on her English, which she had culled from books.

Then he made her drink from the cup, and was ostentatious in putting his lips to the same part of the brim.

Then she left the table, and inspected all things.

She came to his drawers, opened one, and was horror-struck.

There were coats and trousers, with their limbs interchangeably intertwined, waistcoats, shirts, and cigars, hurled into chaos.

She instantly took the drawer bodily out, brought it, leaned it against the tea-table, pointed silently into it, with an air of majestic reproach, and awaited the result.

"I can find whatever I want," said the unblushing bachelor, "except money."

"Siller does na bide wi' slovens! hae ye often siccan a gale o' wind in your drawer?"

"Every day! Speak English!"

"Aweel! How *do* you *do?* that 's Ennglish! I daur say."

"Jolly!" cried he, with his mouth full.

Christie was now folding up and neatly arranging his clothes.

"Will you ever, ever be a painter?"

"I am a painter! I could paint the Devil pea-green!"

"Dinna speak o' yon lad, Chairles, it 's no canny."

"No! I am going to paint an angel; the prettiest, cleverest girl in Scotland, 'The Snowdrop of the North.'"

And he dashed into his bedroom to find a canvas.

"Hech!" reflected Christie. "Thir Ennglish hae flattering tongues, as sure as Dethe; 'The Snawdrap o' the Norrth!'"

CHAPTER VIII.

Gatty's back was hardly turned when a visitor arrived, and inquired, "Is Mr Gatty at home?"

"What 's your will wi' him?" was the Scottish reply.

"Will you give him this?"

"What est?"

"Are you fond of asking questions?" inquired the man.

"Ay! and fules canna answer them," retorted Christie.

The little document which the man, in retiring, left with Christie Johnstone purported to come from one Victoria, who seemed, at first sight, disposed to show Charles Gatty civilities. "Victoria — to Charles Gatty, greeting! (salutem)." Christie was much struck with this instance of royal affability; she read no further, but began to think, "Victoree! that 's the Queen hersel. A letter fra the Queen to a painter lad! Picters will rise i' the mairket, — it will be an order to paint the bairns. I hae brought him luck; I am real pleased." And on Gatty's return, canvas in hand, she whipped the document behind her, and said archly, "I hae something for ye, a teeket fra a leddy, ye 'll no want siller fra this day."

"Indeed!"

"Ay! indeed, fra a great leddy; it 's vara gude o' me to gie ye it; heh! tak it."

He did take it, looked stupefied, looked again, sunk into a chair, and glared at it.

"Laddy!" said Christie.

"This is a new step on the downward path," said the poor painter.

"Is it no an orrder to paint the young prence?" said Christie, faintly.

"No!" almost shrieked the victim. "It 's a writ! I owe a lot of money."

"O Chairles!"

"See! I borowed sixty pounds six months ago of a friend, so now I owe eighty!"

"All right!" giggled the unfriendly visitor at the door, whose departure had been more or less fictitious.

Christie, by an impulse, not justifiable, but natural, drew her oyster-knife out, and this time the man really went away.

"Hairtless mon!" cried she, "could he no do his ain dirrty work, and no gar me gie the puir lad th' action, and he likeit me sae weel!" and she began to whimper.

"And love you more now," said he; "don't you cry, dear, to add to my vexation."

"Na! I 'll no add to your vexation," and she gulped down her tears.

"Besides, I have pictures painted worth two hundred pounds; this is only for eighty. To be sure you can't sell them for two hundred pence when you want. So I shall go to jail, but they won't keep me long."

Then he took a turn, and began to fall into the artistic, or true view of matters, which, indeed, was never long absent from him.

"Look here, Christie," said he, "I am sick of conventional assassins, humbugging models, with dirty beards, that knit their brows, and try to look murder; they never murdered so much as a tom-cat: I always go in for the real thing, and here I shall find it."

"Dinna gang in there, lad, for ony favor."

"Then I shall find the accessories of a picture I have in my head, — chains with genuine rust, and ancient mouldering stones, with the stains of time." His eye brightened at the prospect.

"You among fiefs, and chains, and stanes! Ye 'll break my hairt, laddy, ye 'll no be easy till you break my hairt": and this time the tears would not be denied.

"I love you for crying; don't cry"; and he fished from the chaotic drawer a cambric handkerchief, with which he dried her tears as they fell.

It is my firm belief she cried nearly twice as much as she really wanted to; she contrived to make the grief

hers, the sympathy his. Suddenly she stopped, and said: —

"I 'm daft; ye 'll accept a lane o' the siller fra me, will ye no?"

"No!" said he. "And where could you find eighty pound?"

"Auchty pund," cried she, "it 's no auchty pund that will ding Christie Johnstone, laddy. I hae boats and nets worth twa auchtys; and I hae forty pund laid by; and I hae seven hundred pund at London, but that I canna meddle. My feyther lent it the King or the Queen, I dinna justly mind; she pays me the interest twice the year. Sae ye ken I could na be sae dirty as seek my siller, when she pays me th' interest: to the very day, ye ken. She 's just the only one o' a' my debtors that 's hoenest, but never heed, ye 'll no gang to jail."

"I 'll hold my tongue, and sacrifice my pictures," thought Charles.

"Cheer up!" said Christie, mistaking the nature of his thoughts, "for it did na come fra Victoree hersel'. It wad smell o' the musk, ye ken. Na, it 's just a wheen blackguards at London that makes use o' her name to torment puir folk. Wad she pairsecute a puir lad? No likely."

She then asked questions, some of which were embarrassing. One thing he could never succeed in making her understand, how, since it was sixty pounds he borrowed, it could be eighty pounds he owed.

Then once more she promised him her protection, bade him be of good cheer, and left him.

At the door she turned, and said: "Chairles, here 's an auld wife seeking ye," and vanished.

These two young people had fallen acquainted at a Newhaven wedding. Christie, belonging to no one, had danced with him all the night, they had walked under the stars to cool themselves, for dancing reels, with heart and soul, is not quadrilling.

Then he had seen his beautiful partner in Edinburgh, and made a sketch of her, which he gave her; and by and by he used to run down to Newhaven, and stroll up and down a certain green lane near the town.

Next, on Sunday evenings, a long walk together, and then it came to visits at his place now and then.

And here Raphael and Fornarina were inverted, our artist used to work, and Christie tell him stories the while.

And, as her voice curled round his heart, he used to smile and look, and lay inspired touches on his subject.

And she, an artist of the tongue (without knowing herself one), used to make him grave, or gay, or sad, at will, and watch the effect of her art upon his countenance; and a very pretty art it is, — the *viva voce* story-teller's, — and a rare one amongst the nations of Europe.

Christie had not learned it in a day; when she began, she used to tell them like the other Newhaven people, with a noble impartiality of detail, wearisome to the hearer.

But latterly she had learned to seize the salient parts of a narrative; her voice had compass, and, like all fine speakers, she travelled over a great many notes in speaking; her low tones were gorgeously rich, her upper tones full and sweet; all this, and her beauty, made the hours she gave him very sweet to our poor artist.

He was wont to bask in her music, and tell her in return how he loved her, and how happy they were both to be as soon as he had acquired a name, for a name was wealth, he told her. And although Christie Johnstone did not let him see how much she took all this to heart and believed it, it was as sweet music to her as her own honeysuckle breath to him.

She improved him.

He dropped cigars, and medical students, and similar abominations.

Christie's cool, fresh breath, as she hung over him while painting, suggested to him that smoking might, peradventure, be a sin against nature as well as against cleanliness.

And he improved her; she learned from art to look into nature (the usual process of mind).

She had noticed too little the flickering gold of the leaves at evening, the purple hills, and the shifting stories and glories of the sky; but now, whatever she saw him try to imitate, she learned to examine. She was a woman, and admired sunset, etc., for this boy's sake, and her whole heart expanded with a new sensation that softened her manner to all the world, and brightened her personal rays.

This charming picture of mutual affection had hitherto been admired only by those who figured in it.

But a visitor had now arrived on purpose to inspect it, etc., attracted by report.

A friend had considerately informed Mrs. Gatty, the artist's mother, and she had instantly started from Newcastle.

This was the old lady Christie discovered on the stairs.

Her sudden appearance took her son's breath away.

No human event was less likely than that she should be there, yet there she was.

After the first surprise and affectionate greetings, a misgiving crossed him, "she must know about the writ," — it was impossible; but our minds are so constituted, — when we are guilty, we fear that others know what we know.

Now Gatty was particularly anxious she should not know about this writ, for he had incurred the debt by acting against her advice.

Last year he commenced a picture in which was Durham Cathedral; his mother bade him stay quietly at home, and paint the cathedral and its banks from a print, "as any other painter would," observed she.

But this was not the lad's system; he spent five months on the spot, and painted his picture, but he had to borrow sixty pounds to do this; the condition of this loan was, that in six months he should either pay eighty pounds, or finish and hand over a certain half-finished picture.

He did neither; his new subject thrust aside his old one, and he had no money, ergo his friend, a picture-dealer, who had found artists slippery in money-matters, followed him up sharp, as we see.

"There is nothing the matter, I hope, mother. What is it?"

"I'm tired, Charles." He brought her a seat: she sat down.

"I did not come from Newcastle at my age, for nothing; you have formed an improper acquaintance."

"I, who? Is it Jack Adams?"

"Worse than any Jack Adams!"

"Who can that be? Jenkyns, mother, because he does the same things as Jack, and pretends to be religious."

"It is a female, — a fishwife. O my son!"

"Christie Johnstone an improper acquaintance," said he; "why! I was good for nothing till I knew her; she has made me so good, mother; so steady, so industrious; you will never have to find fault with me again."

"Nonsense: — a woman that sells fish in the streets!"

"But you have not seen her. She is beautiful, her mind is not in fish; her mind grasps the beautiful and the good, — she is a companion for princes! What am I that she wastes a thought or a ray of music on me? Heaven bless her. She reads our best authors, and never forgets a word; and she tells me beautiful stories, — sometimes they make me cry, for her voice is a music that goes straight to my heart."

"A woman that does not even wear the clothes of a lady."

"It is the only genuine costume in these islands not beneath a painter's notice."

"Look at me, Charles; at your mother."

"Yes, mother," said he, nervously.

"You must part with her, or kill me."

He started from his seat and began to flutter up and down the room; poor excitable creature. "Part with her!" cried he; "I shall never be a painter if I do; what is to keep my heart warm when the sun is hid, when the birds are silent, when difficulty looks a mountain, and success a mole-hill? What is an artist without love? How is he to bear up against his disappointments from within, his mortification from without? the great ideas he has and cannot grasp, and all the forms of ignorance that sting him, from stupid insensibility down to clever, shallow criticism?"

"Come back to common sense," said the old lady, coldly and grimly.

He looked uneasy: common sense had often been quoted against him, and common sense had always proved right.

"Come back to common sense. She shall not be your mistress, and she cannot bear your name; you must part some day, because you cannot come together, and now is the best time."

"Not be together? all our lives, all our lives, ay," cried he, rising into enthusiasm, "hundreds of years to come will we two be together before men's eyes, — I will be an immortal painter, that the world and time may cherish the features I have loved. I love her, mother," added he, with a tearful tenderness that ought to have reached a woman's heart; then flushing, trembling, and inspired, he burst out, "And I wish I was a sculptor and a poet too, that Christie might live in stone and verse, as well as colors, and all who love an art might say, 'This woman cannot die, Charles Gatty loved her.'"

He looked in her face; he could not believe any creature could be insensible to his love, and persist to rob him of it.

The old woman paused, to let his eloquence evaporate.

The pause chilled him; then gently and slowly, but emphatically, she spoke to him thus: —

"Who has kept you on her small means ever since you were ten years and seven months old?"

"You should know, mother, dear mother."

"Answer me, Charles."

"My mother."

"Who has pinched herself, in every earthly thing, to make you an immortal painter, and, above all, a gentleman?"

"My mother."

"Who forgave you the little faults of youth, before you could ask pardon?"

"My mother! O mother, I ask pardon now for all the trouble I ever gave the best, the dearest, the tenderest of mothers."

"Who will go home to Newcastle, a broken-hearted woman, with the one hope gone that has kept her up in poverty and sorrow so many weary years, if this goes on?"

"Nobody, I hope."

"Yes, Charles; your mother."

"O mother; you have been always my best friend."

"And am this day."

"Do not be my worst enemy now: it is for me to obey you; but it is for you to think well before you drive me to despair."

And the poor womanish heart leaned his head on the table, and began to sorrow over his hard fate.

Mrs. Gatty soothed him. "It need not be done all in a moment: it must be done kindly, but firmly. I will give you as much time as you like."

This bait took: the weak love to temporize.

It is doubtful whether he honestly intended to part with Christie Johnstone; but to pacify his mother he promised to begin and gradually untie the knot.

"My mother will go," whispered his deceitful heart, "and, when she is away, perhaps I shall find out that in spite of every effort I cannot resign my treasure."

He gave a sort of half-promise for the sake of peace.

His mother instantly sent to the inn for her boxes.

"There is a room in this same house," said she, "I will take it; I will not hurry you, but until it is done, I stay here, if it is a twelvemonth about."

He turned pale.

"And now hear the good news I have brought you from Newcastle."

Oh! these little iron wills, how is a great artist to fight three hundred and sixty-five days against such an antagonist?

Every day saw a repetition of these dialogues, in which genius made gallant bursts into the air, and strong, hard sense caught him on his descent, and dabbed glue on his gauzy wings.

Old age and youth see life so differently.

To youth, it is a story-book, in which we are to command the incidents, and be the bright exceptions to one rule after another.

To age it is an almanac, in which everything will happen just as it has happened so many times.

To youth, it is a path through a sunny meadow.

To age, a hard turnpike:

Whose travellers must be all sweat and dust, when they are not in mud and drenched:

Which wants mending in many places, and is mended with sharp stones.

Gatty would not yield to go down to Newhaven, and take a step against his love, but he yielded so far as to remain passive, and see whether this creature was necessary to his existence or not.

Mrs. G. scouted the idea.

"He was to work, and he would soon forget her."

Poor boy! he wanted to work; his debt weighed on him; a week's resolute labor might finish his first picture and satisfy his creditor. The subject was an interior. He set to work, he stuck to work, he glued to work, his body, — but his heart?

Ah, my poor fellow, a much slower horse than Gatty will go by you, ridden as you are by a leaden heart.

Tu nihil invita facies pingesve Minerva.

It would not lower a mechanical dog's efforts, but it must yours.

He was unhappy. He heard only one side for days; that side was recommended by his duty, filial affection, and diffidence of his own good sense.

He was brought to see his proceedings were eccentric, and that it is destruction to be eccentric.

He was made a little ashamed of what he had been proud of.

He was confused and perplexed; he hardly knew what to think or do; he collapsed, and all his spirit was fast leaving him, and then he felt inclined to lean on the first thing he could find, and nothing came to hand but his mother.

Meantime, Christie Johnstone was also thinking of him, but her single anxiety was to find this eighty pounds for him.

It is a Newhaven idea that the female is the natural protector of the male, and this idea was strengthened in her case.

She did not fully comprehend his character and temperament, but she saw, by instinct, that she was to be the protector.

Besides, as she was twenty-one, and he only twenty-two, she felt the difference between herself, a woman, and him, a boy, and to leave him to struggle unaided out of his difficulties seemed to her heartless.

Twice she opened her lips to engage the charitable "Vile Count" in his cause, but shame closed them again; this would be asking a personal favor, and one on so large a scale.

Several days passed thus; she had determined not to visit him without good news.

She then began to be surprised, she heard nothing from him.

And now she felt something that prevented her calling on him.

But Jean Carnie was to be married, and the next day the wedding party

were to spend in festivity upon the island of Inch Coombe.

She bade Jean call on him, and, without mentioning her, invite him to this party, from which, he must know, she would not be absent.

Jean Carnie entered his apartment, and at her entrance his mother, who took for granted this was his sweetheart, whispered in his ear that he should now take the first step, and left him.

What passed between Jean Carnie and Charles Gatty is for another chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

A young Viscount with income and person cannot lie *perdu* three miles from Edinburgh.

First one discovers him, then another, then twenty, then all the world, as the whole clique is modestly called.

Before, however, Lord Ipsden was caught, he had acquired a browner tint, a more elastic step, and a stouter heart.

The Aberford prescription had done wonders for him.

He caught himself passing one whole day without thinking of Lady Barbara Sinclair.

But even Aberford had misled him; there were no adventures to be found in the Firth of Forth; most of the days there was no wind to speak of; twice it blew great guns, and the men were surprised at his Lordship going out, but nobody was in any danger except himself; the fishermen had all slipped into port before matters were serious.

He found the merchantmen that could sail creeping on with three reefs in their mainsail; and the Dutchmen lying to and breasting it, like ducks in a pond, and with no more chance of harm.

On one of these occasions he did observe a little steam-tug, going about a knot an hour, and rolling like a washing-tub. He ran down to her, and asked if he could assist her; she answered through the medium of a sooty animal at her helm, that she was (like our universities) "satisfied with her own progress"; she added, being under intoxication, "that, if any danger existed, her scheme was to drown it in the bo-o-owl"; and two days afterwards he saw her puffing and panting, and fiercely dragging a gigantic three-decker out into deep water, like an industrious flea pulling his phaeton.

And now it is my office to relate how Mr. Flucker Johnstone comported himself on one occasion.

As the yacht worked alongside Granton Pier, before running out, the said Flucker calmly and scientifically drew his Lordship's attention to three points: —

The direction of the wind, — the force of the wind, — and his opinion, as a person experienced in the Firth, that it was going to be worse instead of better; in reply, he received an order to step forward to his place in the cutter, —the immediate vicinity of the jib-boom. On this, Mr. Flucker instantly burst into tears."

His Lordship, or, as Flucker called him ever since the yacht came down, "the Skipper," deeming that the higher appellation, inquired, with some surprise, what was the matter with the boy.

One of the crew, who, by the by, squinted, suggested, "It was a slight illustration of the passion of fear."

Flucker confirmed the theory by gulping out: "We 'll never see Newhaven again."

On this the skipper smiled, and ordered him ashore, somewhat peremptorily.

Straightway he began to howl, and, saying, "It was better to be drowned than be the laughing-stock of the place," went forward to his place; on his safe return to port, this young gentleman was very severe on open boats, which, he said "bred womanish notions in hearts naturally dauntless. Give me a lid to the pot," add-

ed he, "and I'll sail with Old Nick, let the wind blow high or low."

The Aberford was wrong when he called love a cutaneous disorder.

There are cutaneous disorders that take that name, but they are no more love than verse is poetry;

Than patriotism is love of country;

Than theology is religion;

Than science is philosophy;

Than paintings are pictures;

Than reciting on the boards is acting;

Than physic is medicine;

Than bread is bread, or gold gold, — in shops.

Love is a state of being; the beloved object is our centre; and our thoughts, affections, schemes, and selves move but round it.

We may diverge hither or thither, but the golden thread still holds us.

Is fair or dark beauty the fairest? The world cannot decide; but love shall decide in a moment.

A halo surrounds her we love, and makes beautiful to us her movements, her looks, her virtues, her faults, her nonsense, her affectation, and herself; and that's love, doctor!

Lord Ipsden was capable of loving like this; but, to do Lady Barbara justice, she had done much to freeze the germ of noble passion; she had not killed, but she had benumbed it.

"Saunders," said Lord Ipsden, one morning after breakfast, "have you entered everything in your diary?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"All these good people's misfortunes?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Do you think you have spelt their names right?"

"Where it was impossible, my Lord, I substituted an English appellation, hidentical in meaning."

"Have you entered and described my first interview with Christie Johnstone, and somebody something?"

"Most minutely, my Lord."

"How I turned Mr. Burke into poetry, — how she listened with her eyes all glistening, — how they made me talk, — how she dropped a tear, he! he! he! at the death of the first baron, — how shocked she was at the king striking him when he was dying, to make a knight-banneret of the poor old fellow?"

"Your Lordship will find all the particulars exactly related," said Saunders, with dry pomp.

"How she found out that titles are but breath, — how I answered — some nonsense?"

"Your Lordship will find all the topics included."

"How she took me for a madman? And you for a prig?"

"The latter circumstance eluded my memory, my Lord."

"But when I told her I must relieve only one poor person by day, she took my hand."

"Your Lordship will find all the items realized in this book, my Lord."

"What a beautiful book!"

"Alba are considerably ameliorated, my Lord."

"Alba?"

"Plural of album, my Lord," explained the refined factotum, "more delicate, I conceive, than the vulgar reading."

Viscount Ipsden read from

"MR. SAUNDERS'S ALBUM.

"To illustrate the inelegance of the inferior classes, two juvenile vendors of the piscatory tribe were this day ushered in, and instantaneously, without the accustomed preliminaries, plunged into a familiar conversation with Lord Viscount Ipsden.

"Their vulgarity, shocking and repulsive to myself, appeared to afford his Lordship a satisfaction greater than he derives from the graceful amenities of fashionable association —"

"Saunders, I suspect you of something."

"Me, my Lord!"

"Yes. Writing in an Annual."

"I do, my Lord," said he, with be-

nignant *hauteur.* "It appears every month, — 'The Polytechnic.' "

"I thought so! you are polysyllabic, Saunders; *en route!*"

"In this hallucination I find it difficult to participate; associated from infancy with the aristocracy, I shrink, like the sensitive plant, from contact with anything vulgar."

"I see! I begin to understand you, Saunders. Order the dog-cart, and Wordsworth's mare for leader; we'll give her a trial. You are an ass, Saunders."

"Yes, my Lord; I will order Robert to tell James to come for your Lordship's commands about your Lordship's vehicles. (What could he intend by a recent observation of a discourteous character?)"

His Lordship soliloquized.

"I never observed it before, but Saunders is an ass! La Johnstone is one of Nature's duchesses, and she has made me know some poor people that will be richer than the rich one day; and she has taught me that honey is to be got from bank-notes, — by merely giving them away."

Amongst the objects of charity Lord Ipsden discovered was one Thomas Harvey, a maker and player of the violin. This man was a person of great intellect; he mastered every subject he attacked. By a careful examination of all the points that various fine-toned instruments had in common, he had arrived at a theory of sound; he made violins to correspond, and was remarkably successful in insuring that which had been too hastily ascribed to accident, — a fine tone.

This man, who was in needy circumstances, demonstrated to his Lordship that ten pounds would make his fortune; because with ten pounds he could set up a shop, instead of working out of the world's sight in a room.

Lord Ipsden gave him ten pounds!

A week after, he met Harvey, more ragged and dirty than before.

Harvey had been robbed by a friend whom he had assisted. Poor Harvey! Lord Ipsden gave him ten pounds more!

Next week, Saunders, entering Harvey's house, found him in bed at noon, because he had no clothes to wear.

Saunders suggested that it would be better to give his wife the next money, with strict orders to apply it usefully.

This was done!

The next day, Harvey, finding his clothes upon a chair, his tools redeemed from pawn, and a beefsteak ready for his dinner, accused his wife of having money, and meanly refusing him the benefit of it. She acknowledged she had a little, and appealed to the improved state of things as a proof that she knew better than he the use of money. He demanded the said money. She refused, — he leathered her, — she put him in prison.

This was the best place for him. The man was a drunkard, and all the riches of Egypt would never have made him better off.

And here, gentlemen of the lower classes, a word with you. How can you, with your small incomes, hope to be well off, if you are more extravagant than those who have large ones?

"Us extravagant?" you reply.

Yes! your income is ten shillings a week; out of that you spend three shillings in drink; ay! you, the sober ones. You can't afford it, my boys. Find me a man whose income is a thousand a year; well, if he imitates you, and spends three hundred upon sensuality, I bet you the odd seven hundred he does not make both ends meet; the proportion is too great. And *two thirds of the distress of the lower orders is owing to this, — that they are more madly prodigal than the rich; in the worst, lowest, and most dangerous item of all human prodigality!*

Lord Ipsden went to see Mrs. Harvey; it cost him much to go; she lived in the Old Town, and he hated disagreeable smells; he also knew from Saunders that she had two black eyes, and he hated women with black eyes of that sort. But this good creature did go; did relieve Mrs. Harvey;

and bare-headed suffered himself to be bedewed ten minutes by her tearful twaddle.

For once Virtue was rewarded: returning over the North Bridge, he met somebody whom, but for his charity, he would not have met.

He came in one bright moment plump upon — Lady Barbara Sinclair. She flushed, he trembled, and in two minutes he had forgotten every human event that had passed since he was by her side.

She seemed pleased to see him, too; she ignored entirely his obnoxious proposal; he wisely took her cue, and so, on this secret understanding, they were friends. He made his arrangements, and dined with her family. It was a family party. In the evening Lady Barbara allowed it to transpire that she had made inquiries about him.

(He was highly flattered.) And she had discovered he was lying hid somewhere in the neighborhood.

"Studying the guitar?" inquired she.

"No," said he, "studying a new class of the community. Do you know any of what they call the 'lower classes'?"

"Yes."

"Monstrous agreeable people, are they not?"

"No, very stupid! I only know two old women, — except the servants, who have no characters. They imitate us, I suspect, which does not say much for their taste."

"But some of my friends are young women; that makes all the difference."

"It does! and you ought to be ashamed. If you want a low order of mind, why desert our own circle?"

"My friends are only low in station; they have rather lofty minds, some of them."

"Well, amuse yourself with these lofty minds. Amusement is the end of being, you know, and the aim of all the men of this day."

"We imitate the ladies," said he, slyly.

"You do," answered she, very dryly; and so the dialogue went on, and Lord Ipsden found the pleasure of being with his cousin compensate him fully for the difference of their opinions; in fact, he found it simply amusing that so keen a wit as his cousin's could be entrapped into the humor of decrying the time one happens to live in, and admiring any epoch one knows next to nothing about, and entrapped by the notion of its originality, above all things; the idea being the stale commonplace of asses in every age, and the manner of conveying the idea being a mere imitation of the German writers, not the good ones, *bien entendu*, but the quill-drivers, the snobs of the Teutonic pen.

But he was to learn that follies are not always laughable, that *eadem sentire* is a bond, and that, when a clever and pretty woman chooses to be a fool, her lover if he is wise will be a greater, — if he can.

The next time they met, Lord Ipsden found Lady Barbara occupied with a gentleman whose first sentence proclaimed him a pupil of Mr. Thomas Carlyle, and he had the mortification to find that she had neither an ear nor an eye for him.

Human opinion has so many shades, that it is rare to find two people agree.

But two people may agree wonderfully, if they will but let a third think for them both.

Thus it was that these two ran so smoothly in couples.

Antiquity, they agreed, was the time when the world was old, its hair gray, its head wise. Every one that said, "Lord, Lord!" two hundred years ago was a Christian. There were no earnest men now; Williams, the missionary, who lived and died for the Gospel, was not earnest in religion; but Cromwell, who packed a jury, and so murdered his prisoner, — Cromwell, in whose mouth was heaven, and in his heart temporal sovereignty, — was the pattern of earnest

religion, or, at all events, second in sincerity to Mahomet alone, in the absence of details respecting Satan, of whom we know only that his mouth is a Scripture concordance, and his hands the hands of Mr. Carlyle's saints.

Then they went back a century or two, and were eloquent about the great antique heart, and the beauty of an age whose samples were Abbot Sampson and Joan of Arc.

Lord Ipsden hated argument; but jealousy is a brass spur, it made even this man fluent for once.

He suggested "that five hundred years added to a world's life made it just five hundred years older, not younger, — and if older, grayer, — and if grayer, wiser.

"Of Abbot Sampson," said he, "whom I confess both a great and a good man, his author, who with all his talent belongs to the class muddle-head, tells us that when he had been two years in authority his red hair had turned gray, fighting against the spirit of his age; how the deuce, then, could he be a sample of the spirit of his age?

"Joan of Arc was burnt by acclamation of her age, and is admired by our age. Which fact identifies an age most with a heroine, to give her your heart, or to give her a blazing fagot and death?

"Abbot Sampson and Joan of Arc," concluded he, "prove no more in favor of their age, and no less against it, than Lot does for or against Sodom. Lot was in Sodom, but not of it; and so were Sampson and Joan in, but not of, the villanous times they lived in.

"The very best text-book of true religion is the New Testament, and I gather from it, that the man who forgives his enemies whilst their axe descends on his head, however poor a creature he may be in other respects, is a better Christian than the man who has the God of Mercy forever on his lips, and whose hands are swift to shed blood.

"The earnest men of former ages are not extinct in this," added he. "Whenever a scaffold is erected outside a prison-door, if you are earnest in pursuit of truth, and can put up with disgusting objects, you shall see a relic of ancient manners hung.

"There still exist, in parts of America, rivers on whose banks are earnest men who shall take your scalp, the wife's of your bosom, and the innocent child's of her bosom.

"In England we are as earnest as ever in pursuit of heaven, and of innocent worldly advantages. If, when the consideration of life and death interposes, we appear less earnest in pursuit of comparative trifles such as kingdoms or dogmas, it is because cooler in action we are more earnest in thought, — because reason, experience, and conscience are things that check the unscrupulousness or beastly earnestness of man.

"Moreover, he who has the sense to see that questions have three sides is no longer so intellectually as well as morally degraded as to be able to cut every throat that utters an opinion contrary to his own.

"If the phrase 'earnest man' means man imitating the beasts that are deaf to reason, it is to be hoped that civilization and Christianity will really extinguish the whole race for the benefit of the earth."

Lord Ipsden succeeded in annoying the fair theorist, but not in convincing her.

The mediæval enthusiasts looked on him as some rough animal that had burst into sacred grounds unconsciously, and gradually edged away from him.

CHAPTER X.

Lord Ipsden had soon the mortification of discovering that this Mr. * * * was a constant visitor at the house; and, although his cousin gave him her ear in this man's absence, on the arrival of her fellow-enthusiast he had

ever the mortification of finding himself *de trop*.

Once or twice he demolished this personage in argument, and was rewarded by finding himself more *de trop*.

But one day Lady Barbara, being in a cousinly humor, expressed a wish to sail in his Lordship's yacht, and this hint soon led to a party being organized, and a sort of picnic on the island of Inch Coombe; his Lordship's cutter being the mode of conveyance to and from that spot.

Now it happened on that very day Jean Carnie's marriage was celebrated on that very island by her relations and friends.

So that we shall introduce our readers to

THE RIVAL PICNICS.

We begin with *Les gens comme il faut.*

Picnic No. 1.

The servants were employed in putting away dishes into hampers.

There was a calm silence.

"Hem!" observed Sir Henry Talbot.

"Eh?" replied the Honorable Tom Hitherington.

"Mamma," said Miss Vere, "have you brought any work?"

"No, my dear."

"At a picnic," said Mr. Hitherington, "is n't it the thing for somebody — aw — to do something?"

"Ipsden," said Lady Barbara, "there is an understanding *between* you and Mr. Hitherington. I condemn you to turn him into English."

"Yes, Lady Barbara; I'll tell you, he means, — do you mean anything, Tom?"

Hitherington. "Can't anybody guess what I mean?"

Lady Barbara. "Guess first yourself, you can't be suspected of being in the secret."

Hither. What I mean is, that people sing a song, or run races, or preach a sermon, or do something funny at a picnic, — aw — somebody gets up and does something."

Lady Bar. "Then perhaps Miss Vere, whose singing is famous, will have the complaisance to sing to us."

Miss Vere. "I should be happy, Lady Barbara, but I have not brought my music."

Lady Bar. "O, we are not critical; the simplest air, or even a fragment of melody; the sea and the sky will be a better accompaniment than Broadwood ever made."

Miss V. "I can't sing a note without book."

Sir H. Talbot. "Your music is in your soul, — not at your fingers' ends."

Lord Ipsden, to Lady Bar. "It is in her book, and not in her soul."

Lady Bar., to Lord Ips. "Then it has chosen the better situation of the two."

Ips. "Miss Vere is to the fine art of music what the engrossers are to the black art of law; it all filters through them without leaving any sediment; and so the music of the day passes through Miss Vere's mind, but none remains — to stain its virgin snow." He bows, she smiles.

Lady Bar., to herself. "Insolent: and the little dunce thinks he is complimenting her."

Ips. "Perhaps Talbot will come to our rescue, — he is a fiddler."

Tal. "An amateur of the violin."

Ips. "It is all the same thing."

Lady Bar. "I wish it may prove so."

Tal.

(Grave.)

Bis. *Bis.*

fff *Prestissimo.*

Cres.

8va.

loco harmonic, quick and short.

Miss V. "Beautiful."

Mrs. Vere. "Charming."

Hither. "Superb!"

Ips. "You are aware that good music is a thing to be wedded to immortal verse, shall I recite a bit of poetry to match Talbot's strain?"

Miss V. "O yes! how nice."

Ips. (*rhetorically.*) "A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V. W. X. Y. Z. Y. X. W. V. U. T. S. O. N. M. L. K. J. I. H. G. F. A. M. little p. little t."

Lady Bar. "Beautiful! Superb! Ipsden has been taking lessons on the thinking instrument."

Hither. "He has been *perdu* amongst vulgar people."

Tal. "And expects a pupil of Herz to play him tunes!"

Lady Bar. "What are tunes, Sir Henry?"

Tal. "Something I don't play, Lady Barbara."

Lady Bar. "I understand you; something we ought to like."

Ips. "I have a Stradivarius violin at home: it is yours, Talbot, if you can define a tune."

Tal. "A tune is — everybody knows what."

Lady Bar. "A tune is a tune, that is what you meant to say."

Tal. "Of course it is."

Lady Bar. "Be reasonable, Ipsden; no man can do two things at once; how can the pupil of Herz condemn a thing and know what it means contemporaneously?"

Ips. "Is the drinking-song in 'Der Freischutz' a tune?"

Lady Bar. "It is."

Ips. "And the melodies of Handel, are they tunes?"

Lady Bar. (*pathetically.*) "They are! They are!"

Ips. "And the 'Russian Anthem,' and the 'Marseillaise,' and 'Ah, Perdona'?"

Tal. "And Yankee Doodle?"

Lady Bar. "So that Sir Henry, who prided himself on his ignorance, has a wide field for its dominion."

Tal. "All good violin-players do like me; they prelude, not play tunes."

Ips. "Then Heaven be thanked for our blind fiddlers. You like syllables of sound in unmeaning rotation, and you despise its words, its purposes, its narrative feats; carry out your principle, it will show you where you are. Buy a dirty palette for a picture, and dream the alphabet is a poem."

Lady Bar., to herself. "Is this my cousin Richard?"

Hither. "Mind, Ipsden, you are a man of property, and there are such things as commissions *de lunatico.*"

Lady Bar. "His defence will be that his friends pronounce him insane."

Ips. "No; I shall subpœna Talbot's fiddle, cross-examination will get nothing out of that but, do, re, mi, fa."

Lady Bar. "Yes, it will; fa, mi, re, do."

Tal. "Violin, if you please."

Lady Bar. "Ask Fiddle's pardon, directly."

Sound of fiddles is heard in the distance.

Tal. "How lucky for you, there are fiddles and tunes, and the natives you are said to favor, why not join them?"

Ips. (*shaking his head solemnly.*) "I dread to encounter another prelude."

Hither. "Come, I know you would like; it is a wedding-party, — two sea monsters have been united. The sailors and fishermen are all blue cloth and wash-leather gloves."

Miss V. "He! he!"

Tal. "The fishwives unite the colors of the rainbow —"

Lady Bar. "(And we all know how hideous they are) — to vulgar, blooming cheeks, staring white teeth, and sky-blue eyes.

Mrs. V. "How satirical you are, especially you, Lady Barbara."

Here Lord Ipsden, after a word to Lady Barbara, the answer to which did not appear to be favorable, rose, gave a little yawn, looked steadily at his companions without seeing them, and departed without seeming aware that he was leaving anybody behind him.

Hither. "Let us go somewhere where we can quiz the natives without being too near them."

Lady Bar. "I am tired of this unbroken solitude, I must go and think to the sea," added she, in a mock soliloquy; and out she glided with the same unconscious air as his Lordship had worn.

The others moved off slowly together.

"Mamma," said Miss Vere, "I can't understand half Barbara Sinclair says."

"It is not necessary, my love," replied mamma; "she is rather eccentric, and I fear she is spoiling Lord Ipsden."

"Poor Lord Ipsden," murmured the lovely Vere, "he used to be so nice, and do like everybody else. Mamma, I shall bring some work the next time."

"Do, my love."

Picnic No. 2.

In a house, two hundred yards from this scene, a merry dance, succeeding a merry song, had ended, and they were in the midst of an interesting story; Christie Johnstone was the narrator. She had found the tale in one of the Viscount's books, — it had made a great impression on her.

The rest were listening intently: in a room which had lately been all noise, not a sound was now to be heard but the narrator's voice.

"Aweel, lasses, here are the three wee kists set, the lads are to chuse, — the ane that chuses reicht is to get Porsha, an' the lave to get the bag, and dee baitchelars; — Flucker Johnstone, you that's sae clever, — are ye for gowd, or siller, or leed?"

1st Fishwife. "Gowd for me!"

2d ditto. "The white siller 's my taste."

Flucker. "Na! there's aye some deevelish trick in thir lassie's stories. I shall lie to, till the ither lads hae chused; the mair part will put themsels oot, ane will hit it off reicht maybe, then I shall gie him a hidin' an' carry off the lass. You-hoo!"

Jean Carnie. "That's you, Flucker."

Christie Johnstone. "And div ye really think we are gawn to let you see a' the world chuse? Na, lad, ye are putten oot o' the room, like witnesses."

Flucker. "Then I'd toss a penny; for gien ye trust to luck, she whiles favors ye, but gien ye commence to reason and argefy — ye're done!"

Christie. "The suitors had na your wit, my manny, or maybe they had na a penny to toss, sae ane chused the gowd, ane the siller; but they got an awfu' affront. The gold kist had just a skull intil 't, and the siller a deed cuddy's head!"

Chorus of Females. "He! he! he!"

Ditto of Males. "Haw! haw! haw! haw! Ho!"

Christie. "An' Porsha puttit the pair of gowks to the door. Then came Bassanio, the lad fra Veeneece, that Porsha loed in secret. Veeneece, lasses, is a wonderful city; the streets o' 't are water, and the carriages are boats, — that 's in Chambers'."

Flucker. "Wha are ye making a fool o'?"

Christie. "What 's wrang?"

Flucker. "Yon 's just as big a lee as ever I heerd."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth ere he had reason to regret them; a severe box on the ear was administered by his indignant sister. Nobody pitied him.

Christie. "I'll laern ye t' affront me before a' the company."

Jean Carnie. "Suppose it 's a lee, there 's nae silver to pay for it, Flucker."

Christie. "Jean, I never telt a lee in a' my days."

Jean. "There 's ane to begin wi' then. Go ahead, Custy."

Christie. "She bade the music play for him, for music brightens thoucht; ony way, he chose the leed kist. Open'st and was n't there Porsha's pictur, and a posy, that said,

'If you be well pleased with this,
And hold your fortune for your bliss;
Turn you where your leddy iss,
And greet her wi' a loving — ' " (*Pause.*)

"Kess," roared the company.

Chorus, led by Flucker. "Hurraih!"

Christie (*pathetically*). "Flucker, behave!"

Sandy Liston (*drunk*). "Hur-raih!" He then solemnly reflected. "Na! but it 's na hurraih, decency requires amen first an' hurraih afterwards; here 's kissin plenty, but I hear nae word o' the minister. Ye 'll obsairve, young woman, that kissin 's the prologue to sin, and I 'm a decent mon, an' a gray-headed mon, an' your licht stories are no for me; sae if the minister 's no expeckit I shall retire, — an' tak my quiet gill my lane."

Jean Carnie. "And div ye really think a decent cummer like Custy wad let the lad and lass misbehave thirsels? Na! lad, the minister 's at the door, but" (sinking her voice to a confidential whisper) "I daurna let him in, for fear he 'd see ye hae putten the enemy in your mooth sae aerly. (That 's Custy's word.")

"Jemmy Drysel," replied Sandy, addressing vacancy, for Jemmy was mysteriously at work in the kitchen, "ye hae gotten a thoughtfu' wife." (Then, with a strong revulsion of feeling.) "Dinna let the blăkguŭrd * in here," cried he, "to spoil the young folk's sporrt."

Christie. "Aweel, lassies, comes a letter to Bassanio; he reads it, and turns as pale as deeth."

A Fishwife. "Gude help us."

Christie. "Poorsha behooved to ken his grief, wha had a better reicht? 'Here 's a letter, leddy,' says he, 'the paper 's the boedy of my freend, like, and every word in it a gaping wound.' "

A Fisherman. "Mairey on us."

Christie. "Lad, it was fra puir Antonio, ye mind o' him, lasses. Hech! the ill luck o' yon man, no a ship come hame; ane foundered at sea, coming fra Tri-po-lis; the pirates scuttled another, an' ane ran ashore on the Goodwins, near Bright-helmstane, that 's in England itsel', I daur say: sae he could na pay the three thoosand ducats, an' Shylock had grippit him, an' sought the pund o' flesh aff the breest o' him, puir body."

Sandy Liston. "He would na be the waur o' a wee bit hiding, yon thundering urang-utang; let the man alane, ye cursed old cannibal."

Christie. "Poorsha keepit her man but ae hoor till they were united, an' then sent him wi' a puckle o' her ain siller to Veeneece, and Antonio, — think o' that, lassies, — pairted on their wedding-day."

Lizzy Johnstone, a Fishwife, aged 12. "Hech! hech! it 's lamēntable.

Jean Carnie. "I 'm saying, mairriage is quick wark, in some pairts, — here there 's an awfu' trouble to get a man."

A young Fishwife. "Ay, is there."

Omnes. "Haw! haw! haw!" (The fishwife hides.)

Christie. "Fill your taupsels, lads and lasses, and awa to Veneece."

Sandy Liston (*sturdily*). "I 'll no gang to sea this day."

Christie. "Noo, we are in the hall o' judgment. Here are set the judges, awfu' to behold; there, on his throne, presides the Juke."

Flucker. "She 's awa to her Enng-lish."

Lizzy Johnstone. "Did we come to Veeneece to speak Scoetch, ye useless fule?"

Christie. "Here, pale and hopeless, but resigned, stands the broken mairchant, Antonio; there, wi' scales and knives, and revenge in his murderin' eye, stands the crewel Jew Shylock."

"Aweel," muttered Sandy, considerately, "I 'll no mak a disturbance on a wedding-day."

Christie. "They wait for Bell — I dinna mind his mind — a laerned lawyer, ony way; he 's sick, but sends

* At present this is a spondee in England, — a trochee in Scotland. The pronunciation of this important word ought to be fixed, representing, as it does, so large a portion of the community in both countries.

ane mair laerned still, and, when this ane comes, he looks not older nor wiser than mysel."

Flucker. "No possible!"

Christie. "Ye needna be sae sarcy, Flucker, for when he comes to his wark he soon lets 'em ken, — runs his een like lightening ower the boend. "This bond 's forfeit. Is Antonio not able to dischairge the money?' 'Ay!" cries Bassanio, 'here 's the sum thrice told.' Says the young judge, in a bit whisper to Shylock, 'Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offered thee. Be mairceful,' says he, out loud. 'Wha 'll mak me?' says the Jew body. 'Mak ye!' says he; 'mairey is no a thing ye strain through a sieve, mon; it droppeth like the gentle dew fra' heaven upon the place beneath; it blesses him that gives and him that taks; it becomes the king better than his throne, and airthly power is maist like God's power when mairey seasons justice.'"

Robert Haw, Fisherman. "Dinna speak like that to me, onybody, or I shall gie ye my boat, and fling my nets intil it, as ye sail awa wi' her."

Jean Carnie. "Sae he let the puir deevil go. Oh! ye ken wha could stand up against siccan a shower o' Ennglish as thaat."

Christie. "He just said, 'My deeds upon my heed. I claim the law,' says he; 'there is no power in the tongue o' man to alter me. I stay here on my boend.'"

Sandy Liston. "I hae sat quiet! — quiet I hae sat against my will, no to disturb Jamie Drysel's weddin'; but ye carry the game ower far, Shylock, my lad. I 'll just give yon bluidy-minded ŭrāng-ŭtāng a hidin', and bring Tony off, the gude, puir-spirited creature: and him, an' me, an' Bassanee, an' Porshee, we 'll all hae a gill thegither."

He rose, and was instantly seized by two of the company, from whom he burst furiously, after a struggle, and the next moment was heard to fall clean from the top to the bottom of the stairs. Flucker and Jean ran out; the rest appealed against the interruption.

Christie. "Hech! he 's killed; Sandy Liston 's brake his neck."

"What aboot it, lassy?" said a young fisherman; "it 's *Antonio* I 'm feared for; save him, lassy, if poessible; but I doot ye 'll no get him clear o' yon deevelich heathen.

"Auld Sandy 's cheap sairved," added he, with all the indifference a human tone could convey.

"O Cursty," said Lizzy Johnstone, with a peevish accent, "dinna break the bonny yarn for naething."

Flucker (*returning*). "He 's a' reicht."

Christie. "Is he no dead?"

Flucker. "Him deed? he 's sober, — that 's a' the change I see."

Christie. "Can he speak? I 'm asking ye."

Flucker. "Yes, he can speak."

Christie. "What does he say, puir body?"

Flucker. "He sat up, an' sought a gill fra' the wife — puir body!"

Christie. "Hech, hech! he was my pupil in the airt o' sobriety! — aweel, the young judge rises to deliver the sentence of the coort. Silence!" thundered Christie. A lad and a lass that were slightly flirting were discountenanced.

Christie. "A pund o' that same mairchant's flesh is thine! the coort awards it, and the law does give it."

A young Fishwife. "There, I thoucht sae; he 's gaun to cut him, he 's gaun to cut him; I 'll no can bide." (*Exibat.*)

Christie. "There 's a fulish goloshen. 'Have by a doctor to stop the blood.' — 'I see nae doctor in the boend,' says the Jew body."

Flucker. "Bait your hook wi' a boend, and ye shall catch yon carle's saul, Satin, my lad."

Christie (*with dismal pathos*). "O Flucker, dinna speak evil o' deegneties — that 's maybe fishing for yoursel' the noo! — 'An' ye shall cut the flesh frae off his breest.' — 'A sentence,' says Shylock, 'come, prepare.'"

Christie made a dash *en Shylock*, and the company trembled.

Christie. "'Bide a wee,' says the judge, 'this boend gies ye na a drap o' bluid; the words expressly are, a pund o' flesh!'"

(*A Dramatic Pause.*)

Jean Carnie (*drawing her breath*). "That's into your mutton, Shylock."

Christie (*with dismal pathos*). "O Jean! yon's an awfu' voolgar exprassion to come fra' a woman's mooth."

"Could ye no hae said, 'intil his bacon'?" said Lizzy Johnstone, confirming the remonstrance.

Christie. "Then tak your boend, an' your pund o' flesh, but in cutting o' 't, if thou dost shed one drop of Christian bluid, thou diest!"

Jean Carnie. "Hech!"

Christie. "Thy goods are by the laws of Veneece con-fis-cate, confiscate!"

Then, like an artful narrator, she began to wind up the story more rapidly.

"Sae Shylock got to be no sae saucy: 'Pay the boend thrice,' says he, 'and let the puir deevil go.'—'Here it's,' says Bassanio.—Na! the young judge wadna let him.—'He has refused it in open coort; no a bawbee for Shylock but just the forfeiture; an' he daur na tak it.'—'I'm awa',' says he. 'The deivil tak ye a'.'—Na! he wasna to win clear sae; ance they'd gotten the Jew on the hep, they worried him, like good Christians, that's a fact. The judge fand a law that fitted him, for conspiring against the life of a citizen; an' he behooved to give up hoose an' lands, and be a Christian; yon was a soor drap,—he tarned no weel, puir auld villain, an' scairtit; an' the lawyers sent ane o' their weary parchments till his hoose, and the puir auld heathen signed awa' his siller, an' Abraham, an' Isaac, an' Jacob, on the heed o' 't. I pity him, an auld, auld man; and his dochter had rin off wi' a Christian lad,—they ca' her Jessica, and did n't she steal his very diamond ring that his ain lass gied him when he was young, an' maybe no sae hard-hairted?"

Jean Carnie. "O the jaud! suppose he was a Jew, it was na her business to clean him oot."

A young Fishwife. "Aweel, it was only a Jew body, that's my comfort."

Christie. "Ye speak as a Jew was na a man; has not a Jew eyes, if ye please?"

Lizzy Johnstone. "Ay, has he!—and the awfuest lang neb atween em."

Christie. "Has not a Jew affections, paassions, organs?"

Jean. "Na! Christie; thir lads comes fr' Italy!"

Christie. "If you prick him, does he not bleed? if you tickle him, does na he lauch?"

A young Fishwife (*pertly*). "I never kittlet a Jew, for my pairt,—sae I'll no can tell ye."

Christie. "If you poison him, does he not die? and if you wrang him," (*with fury*,) "shall he not revenge?"

Lizzy Johnstone. "Oh! but ye're a fearsome lass."

Christie. "Wha'll give me a sang for my bonny yarn?"

Lord Ipsden, who had been an unobserved auditor of the latter part of the tale, here inquired whether she had brought her book.

"What'n buik?"

"Your music-book!"

"Here's my music-book," said Jean, roughly tapping her head.

"And here's mines," said Christie, bird-ly, touching her bosom.

"Richard," said she, thoughtfully, "I wish ye may no hae been getting in voolgar company: div ye think we hae minds like rinning water?"

Flucker (*avec malice*). "And tongues like the mill-clack abune it? Because if ye think sae, captain,—ye're no far wrang!"

Christie. "Na! we hae na muckle gowd maybe; but our minds are gowden vessels."

Jean. "Aha! lad."

Christie. "They are not saxpenny

sieves, to let music an' metre through, and leave us none the wiser or better. Dinna gang in low voolgar company, or you a lost laddy."

Ipsden. "Vulgar, again! everybody has a different sense for that word, I think. What is vulgar?"

Christie. "Voolgar folk sit on an chair, ane, twa, whiles three hours, eatin' an' abune a' drinkin', as still as hoegs, or gruntin' puir every-day clashes, goessip, rubbich; when ye are aside them, ye might as weel be aside a cuddy; they canna gie ye a sang, they canna gie ye a story, they canna think ye a thoucht, to save their useless lives; that 's voolgar folk."

She sings. "A caaller herrin'!"

Jean. "A caaller herrin'!"

Omnes.

> "Come buy my bonny caaller herrin',
> Six a penny caaller from the sea," &c.

The music chimed in, and the moment the song was done, without pause, or anything to separate or chill the succession of the arts, the fiddles diverged with a gallant plunge into "The Dusty Miller." The dancers found their feet by an instinct as rapid, and a rattling reel shook the floor like thunder. Jean Carnie assumed the privilege of a bride, and seized his Lordship; Christie, who had a mind to dance with him too, took Flucker captive, and these four were one reel! There were seven others.

The principle of reel dancing is articulation; the foot strikes the ground for every *accented* note (and, by the by, it is their weakness of accent which makes all English reel and hornpipe players such failures).

And in the best steps of all, which it has in common with the hornpipe, such as the quick "heel and toe," "the sailor's fling," and the "double shuffle," the foot strikes the ground for every *single* note of the instrument.

All good dancing is beautiful.

But this articulate dancing, compared with the loose, lawless diffluence of motion that goes by that name, gives me (I must confess it) as much more pleasure as articulate singing is superior to tunes played on the voice by a young lady:

Or the clean playing of my mother to the piano-forte splashing of my daughter; though the latter does attack the instrument as a washerwoman her soapsuds, and the former works like a lady.

Or skating to sliding:

Or English verse to dactyls in English:

Or painting to daubing:

Or preserved strawberries to strawberry jam.

What says Goldsmith of the two styles?

"They swam, sprawled, frisked, and languished; but Olivia's foot was as pat to the music as its echo." — *Vicar of Wakefield.*

Newhaven dancing aims also at fun; laughter mingles with agility; grotesque, yet graceful gestures are flung in, and little inspiring cries flung out.

His Lordship soon entered into the spirit of it. Deep in the mystery of the hornpipe, he danced one or two steps Jean and Christie had never seen, but their eyes were instantly on his feet, and they caught in a minute and executed these same steps.

To see Christie Johnstone do the double-shuffle with her arms so saucily akimbo, and her quick elastic foot at an angle of forty-five, was a treat.

The dance became inspiriting, inspiring, intoxicating; and, when the fiddles at last left off, the feet went on another seven bars by the enthusiastic impulse.

And so, alternately spinning yarns, singing songs, dancing, and making fun, and mingling something of heart and brain in all, these benighted creatures made themselves happy instead of peevish, and with a day of stout, vigorous, healthy pleasure, refreshed, indemnified, and warmed themselves for many a day of toil.

Such were the two picnics of Inch Coombe, and these rival cliques,

agreeing in nothing else, would have agreed in this: each, if allowed (but we won't allow either) to judge the other, would have pronounced the same verdict: —

"*Ils ne savent pas vivre ces gens-là.*"

CHAPTER XI.

Two of our personages left Inch Coombe less happy than when they came to it.

Lord Ipsden encountered Lady Barbara with Mr. ***, who had joined her upon the island.

He found them discoursing, as usual, about the shams of the present day, and the sincerity of Cromwell and Mahomet, and he found himself *de trop*.

They made him, for the first time, regret the loss of those earnest times when, "to avoid the inconvenience of both addressing the same lady," you could cut a rival's throat at once, and be smiled on by the fair and society.

That a book-maker should blaspheme high civilization, by which alone he exists, and one of whose diseases and flying pains he is, neither surprised nor moved him; but that any human being's actions should be affected by such tempestuous twaddle was ridiculous.

And that the witty Lady Barbara should be caught by this chaff was intolerable; he began to feel bitter.

He had the blessings of the poor, the good opinion of the world; every living creature was prepossessed in his favor but one, and that one despised him; it was a diabolical prejudice; it was the spiteful caprice of his fate.

His heart, for a moment, was in danger of deteriorating. He was miserable; the Devil suggested to him, "make others miserable too"; and he listened to the advice.

There was a fine breeze, but instead of sailing on a wind, as he might have done, he made a series of tacks, and all were ill.

The earnest man first; and Flucker announced the skipper's insanity to the whole town of Newhaven, for, of course, these tacks were all marine solecisms.

The other discontented Picnician was Christie Johnstone. Gatty never came; and this, coupled with five or six days' previous neglect, could no longer pass unnoticed.

Her gayety failed her before the afternoon was ended; and the last two hours were spent by her alone, watching the water on all sides for him.

At last, long after the departure of his Lordship's yacht, the Newhaven boat sailed from Inch Coombe with the wedding party. There was now a strong breeze, and the water every now and then came on board: so the men set the foresail with two reefs, and drew the mainsail over the women; and there, as they huddled together in the dark, Jean Carnie discovered that our gay story-teller's eyes were wet with tears.

Jean said nothing; she embraced her; and made them flow faster.

But, when they came alongside the pier, Jean, who was the first to get her head from under the sail, whipped it back again, and said to Christie: —

"Here he is, Christie; dinna speak till him."

And sure enough there was, in the twilight, with a pale face and an uneasy look, — Mr. Charles Gatty!

He peered timidly into the boat, and, when he saw Christie, an "Ah!" that seemed to mean twenty different things at once, burst from his bosom. He held out his arm to assist her.

She cast on him one glance of mute reproach, and, placing her foot on the boat's gunwale, sprang like an antelope upon the pier, without accepting his assistance.

Before going further, we must go back for this boy, and conduct him from where we left him up to the present point.

The moment he found himself alone with Jean Carnie, in his own house, he began to tell her what trouble he was in; how his mother had convinced him of his imprudence in falling in love with Christie Johnstone; and how she insisted on a connection being broken off, which had given him his first glimpse of heaven upon earth, and was contrary to common sense.

Jean heard him out, and then, with the air of a lunatic-asylum keeper to a rhodomontading patient, told him "he was one fool, and his mother was another." First she took him up on the score of prudence.

"You," said she, "are a beggarly painter, without a rap; Christie has houses, boats, nets, and money; you are in debt; she lays by money every week. It is not prudent on her part to take up with you, — the better your bargain, my lad."

Under the head of common sense, which she maintained was all on the same side of the question, she calmly inquired: —

"How could an old woman of sixty be competent to judge how far human happiness depends on love, when she has no experience of that passion, and the reminiscences of her youth have become dim and dark? You might as well set a judge in court, that has forgotten the law, — common sense," said she, "the old wife is sixty, and you are twenty, — what can she do for you the forty years you may reckon to outlive her? Who is to keep you through those weary years but the wife of your own choice, not your mother's? You English does na read the Bible, or ye 'd ken that a lad is to 'leave his father and mother, and cleave until his wife,'" added she; then with great contempt she repeated, "common sense, indeed! ye 're fou wi' your common sense; ye hae the name o' 't pat eneuch, — but there 's na muckle o' that mairchandise in your harns."

Gatty was astonished: what! was there really common sense on the side of bliss? and when Jean told him to join her party at Inch Coombe, or never look her in the face again, scales seemed to fall from his eyes; and, with a heart that turned in a moment from lead to a feather, he vowed he would be at Inch Coombe.

He then begged Jean on no account to tell Christie the struggle he had been subjected to, since his scruples were now entirely conquered.

Jean acquiesced at once, and said: "Indeed, she would be very sorry to give the lass that muckle pain."

She hinted, moreover, that her neebor's spirit was so high, she was quite capable of breaking with him at once upon such an intimation; and she, Jean, was "nae mischief-maker."

In the energy of his gratitude, he kissed this dark-browed beauty, professing to see in her a sister.

And she made no resistance to this way of showing gratitude, but muttered between her teeth, "He 's just a bairn!"

And so she went about her business.

On her retreat, his mother returned to him, and, with a sad air, hoped nothing that that rude girl had said had weakened his filial duty.

"No, mother," said he.

She then, without explaining how she came acquainted with Jean's arguments, proceeded to demolish them one by one.

"If your mother is old and experienced," said she, "benefit by her age and experience. She has not forgotten love, nor the ills it leads to, when not fortified by prudence. Scripture says a man shall cleave to his wife when he has left his parents; but in making that, the most important step of life, where do you read that he is to break the fifth commandment? But I do you wrong, Charles, you never could have listened to that vulgar girl when she told you your mother was not your best friend."

"N—no, mother, of course not."

"Then you will not go to that place to break my heart, and undo all you have done this week."

"I should like to go, mother."

"You will break my heart if you do."

"Christie will feel herself slighted, and she has not deserved this treatment from me."

"The other will explain to her, and if she is as good a girl as you say — "

"She is an angel!"

"How can a fishwife be an angel? Well, then, she will not set a son to disobey his mother."

"I don't think she would! but is all the goodness to be on her side?"

"No, Charles, you do your part; deny yourself, be an obedient child, and your mother's blessing and the blessing of Heaven will rest upon you."

In short, he was not to go to Inch Coombe.

He stayed at home, his mother set him to work; he made a poor hand of it, he was so wretched. She at last took compassion on him, and in the evening, when it was now too late for a sail to Inch Coombe, she herself recommended a walk to him.

The poor boy's feet took him towards Newhaven, not that he meant to go to his love, but he could not forbear from looking at the place which held her.

He was about to return, when a spacious blue jacket hailed him. Somewhere inside this jacket was Master Flucker, who had returned in the yacht, leaving his sister on the island.

Gatty instantly poured out a flood of questions.

The baddish boy reciprocated fluency: he informed him "that his sister had been the star of a goodly company, and that, her own lad having stayed away, she had condescended to make a conquest of the skipper himself.

"He had come in quite at the tag-end of one of her stories, but it had been sufficient to do his business, — he had danced with her, had even whistled whilst she sung. (Hech, it was bonny!)

"And when the cutter sailed, he, Flucker, had seen her perched on a rock, like a mermaid, watching their progress, which had been slow, because the skipper, infatuated with so sudden a passion, had made a series of ungrammatical tacks."

For his part he was glad, said the gracious Flucker; the lass was a prideful hussy, that had given some twenty lads a sore heart and him many a sore back; and he hoped his skipper, with whom he naturally identified himself rather than with his sister, would avenge the male sex upon her."

In short, he went upon this tack till he drove poor Gatty nearly mad.

Here was a new feeling superadded; at first he felt injured, but on reflection what cause of complaint had he?

He had neglected her; he might have been her partner, — he had left her to find one where she could.

Fool, to suppose that so beautiful a creature would ever be neglected — except by him!

It was more than he could bear.

He determined to see her, to ask her forgiveness, to tell her everything, to beg her to decide, and, for his part, he would abide by her decision.

Christie Johnstone, as we have already related, declined his arm, sprang like a deer upon the pier, and walked towards her home, a quarter of a mile distant.

Gatty followed her, disconsolately, hardly knowing what to do.

At last, observing that she drew near enough to the wall to allow room for another on the causeway, he had just nous enough to creep alongside, and pull her sleeve somewhat timidly.

"Christie, I want to speak to you."

"What can ye hae to say till me?"

"Christie, I am very unhappy; and I want to tell you why, but I have hardly the strength or the courage."

"Ye shall come ben my hoose if ye are unhappy, and we'll hear your story; come away."

He had never been admitted into her house before.

They found it clean as a snowdrift.

They found a bright fire, and Flucker frying innumerable steaks.

The baddish boy had obtained them in his sister's name and at her expense, at the flesher's, and claimed credit for his affection.

Potatoes he had boiled in their jackets, and so skilfully, that those jackets hung by a thread.

Christie laid an unbleached tablecloth, that somehow looked sweeter than a white one, as brown bread is sweeter than white.

But lo, Gatty could not eat; so then Christie would not, because he refused her cheer.

The baddish boy chuckled, and addressed himself to the nice brown steaks with their rich gravy.

On such occasions a solo on the knife and fork seemed better than a trio to the gracious Flucker.

Christie moved about the room, doing little household matters; Gatty's eye followed her.

Her beauty lost nothing in this small apartment; she was here, like a brilliant in some quaint, rough setting, which all earth's jewellers should despise, and all its poets admire, and it should show off the stone and not itself.

Her beauty filled the room, and almost made the spectators ill.

Gatty asked himself whether he could really have been such a fool as to think of giving up so peerless a creature.

Suddenly an idea occurred to him, a bright one, and not inconsistent with a true artist's character, — he would decline to act in so doubtful a case: he would float passively down the tide of events, — he would neither desert her, nor disobey his mother; he would take everything as it came, and to begin, as he was there, he would for the present say nothing but what he felt, and what he felt was that he loved her.

He told her so accordingly.

She replied, concealing her satisfaction, "that, if he liked her, he would not have refused to eat when she asked him."

But our hero's appetite had returned with his change of purpose, and he instantly volunteered to give the required proof of affection.

Accordingly two pound of steaks fell before him.

Poor boy, he had hardly eaten a genuine meal for a week past.

Christie sat opposite him, and every time he looked off his plate he saw her rich blue eyes dwelling on him.

Everything contributed to warm his heart, he yielded to the spell, he became contented, happy, gay.

Flucker ginger-cordialled him, his sister bewitched him.

She related the day's events in a merry mood.

Mr. Gatty burst forth into singing.

He sung two light and sombre trifles, such as in the present day are deemed generally encouraging to spirits, and particularly in accordance with the sentiment of supper, — they were about Death and Ivy Green.

The dog's voice was not very powerful, but sweet and round as honey dropping from the comb.

His two hearers were entranced, for the creature sang with an inspiration good singers dare not indulge.

He concluded by informing Christie that the ivy was symbolical of her, and the oak prefigured Charles Gatty, Esq.

He might have inverted the simile with more truth.

In short, he never said a word to Christie about parting with her, but several about being buried in the same grave with her, sixty years hence, for which the spot he selected was Westminster Abbey.

And away he went, leaving golden opinions behind him.

The next day Christie was so affected with his conduct, coming as it did after an apparent coolness, that she conquered her bashfulness and called on the "Vile Count," and with some blushes and hesitation inquired, "Whether a painter lad was a fit subject of charity."

"Why not?" said his Lordship.

She then told him Gatty's case, and

he instantly promised to see that artist's pictures, particularly ane "awfu' bonny ane"; the hero of which she described as an English minister blessing the bairns with one hand, and giving orders to kill the puir Scotch with the other.

"C'est égal," said Christie in Scotch, "it's awfu' bonny."

Gatty reached home late; his mother had retired to rest.

But the next morning she drew from him what had happened, and then ensued another of those dialogues which I am ashamed again to give the reader.

Suffice it to say, that she once more prevailed, though with far greater difficulty; time was to be given him to unsew a connection which he could not cut asunder, and he, with tearful eyes and a heavy heart, agreed to take some step the very first opportunity.

This concession was hardly out of his mouth, ere his mother made him kneel down and bestowed her blessing upon him.

He received it coldly and dully, and expressed a languid hope it might prove a charm to save him from despair; and sad, bitter, and dejected, forced himself to sit down and work on the picture that was to meet his unrelenting creditor's demand.

He was working on his picture, and his mother, with her needle at the table, when a knock was heard, and gay as a lark, and fresh as the dew on the shamrock, Christie Johnstone stood in person in the apartment.

She was evidently the bearer of good tidings; but, before she could express them, Mrs. Gatty beckoned her son aside, and announcing, "she should be within hearing," bade him take the occasion that so happily presented itself, and make the first step.

At another time, Christie, who had learned from Jean the arrival of Mrs. Gatty, would have been struck with the old lady's silence; but she came to tell the depressed painter that the charitable Viscount was about to visit him and his picture; and she was so full of the good fortune likely to ensue, that she was neglectful of minor considerations.

It so happened, however, that certain interruptions prevented her from ever delivering herself of the news in question.

First, Gatty himself came to her, and, casting uneasy glances at the door by which his mother had just gone out, said: —

"Christie!"

"My lad!"

"I want to paint your likeness."

This was for a *souvenir*, poor fellow!

"Hech! I wad like fine to be painted."

"It must be exactly the same size as yourself, and so like you, that, should we be parted, I may seem not to be quite alone in the world."

Here he was obliged to turn his head away.

"But we 'll no pairt," replied Christie, cheerfully. "Suppose ye 're puir, I 'm rich, and it 's a' one; dinna be so cast down for auchty pund."

At this, a slipshod servant entered, and said: —

"There 's a fisher lad, inquiring for Christie Johnstone."

"It will be Flucker," said Christie; "show him ben. What 's wrang the noo, I wonder!"

The baddish boy entered, took up a position, and remained apparently passive, hands in pockets.

Christie. "Aweel, what est?"

Flucker. "Custy."

Christie. "What 's your will, my manny?"

Flucker. "Custy, I was at Inch Keith the day."

Christie. "And hae ye really come to Edinbro' to tell me thaat?"

Flucker (*dryly*). "Oh! ye ken the lasses are a hantle wiser than we are, — will ye hear me? South Inch Keith, I played a bowl i' the water, just for divairsion, — and I catched twarree fish!"

Christie. "Floonders, I bet."

Flucker. "Does floonders swim

high? I'll let you see his gills, and if ye are a reicht fishwife ye'll smell bluid."

Here he opened his jacket, and showed a bright little fish.

In a moment all Christie's nonchalance gave way to a fiery animation. She darted to Flucker's side.

"Ye hae na been sae daft as tell?" asked she.

Flucker shook his head contemptuously.

"Ony birds at the island, Flucker?"

"Sea-maws, plenty, and a bird I dinna ken; he moonted sae high, then doon like thunder intil the sea, and gart the water flee as high as Haman, and porpoises as big as my boat."

"Porr-poises, fulish laddy, — ye hae seen the herrin whale at his wark, and the solant guse ye hae seen her at wark; and beneath the sea, Flucker, every coedfish and doegfish, and fish that has teeth, is after them; and half Scotland wad be at Inch Keith Island if they kenned what ye hae tell 't me, — dinna speak to me."

During this, Gatty, who did not comprehend this sudden excitement, or thought it childish, had tried in vain to win her attention.

At last he said, a little peevishly, "Will you not attend to me, and tell me at least when you will sit to me?"

"Set!" cried she. "When there 's nae wark to be done stanning."

And with this she was gone. — At the foot of the stairs, she said to her brother: —

"Puir lad! I'll sune draw auchty punds fra' the sea for him, with my feyther's nets."

As she disappeared, Mrs. Gatty appeared.

"And this is the woman whose mind was not in her dirty business," cried she.

"Does not that open your eyes, Charles?"

"Ah! Charles," added she, tenderly, "there 's no friend like a mother."

And off she carried the prize, — his vanity had been mortified.

And so that happened to Christie Johnstone which has befallen many a woman, — the greatness of her love made that love appear small to her lover.

"Ah! mother," cried he, "I must live for you and my art; I am not so dear to her as I thought."

And so, with a sad heart, he turned away from her; whilst she, with a light heart, darted away to think and act for him.

CHAPTER XII.

It was some two hours after this that a gentleman, plainly dressed, but whose clothes seemed a part of himself (whereas mine I have observed hang upon me; and the Rev. Josiah Splitall's stick to him), — glided into the painter's room, with an inquiry whether he had not a picture or two disposable.

"I have one finished picture, sir," said the poor boy; "but the price is high!"

He brought it, in a faint-hearted way; for he had shown it to five picture-dealers, and all five agreed it was hard.

He had painted a lime-tree, distant fifty yards, and so painted it that it looked something like a lime-tree fifty yards off.

"That was *mesquin*," said his judges; "the poetry of painting required abstract trees, at metaphysical distance, not the various trees of nature, as they appear under positive accidents."

On this Mr. Gatty had deluged them with words.

"When it is art, truth, or sense to fuse a cow, a horse, and a critic into one undistinguishable quadruped, with six legs, then it will be art to melt an ash, an elm, and a lime, things that differ more than quadrupeds, into what you call abstract trees, that any man who has seen a tree, as well as looked at one, would call drunken stinging-nettles. You, who

never look at nature, how can you judge the arts, which are all but copies of nature? At two hundred yards' distance, full-grown trees are more distinguishable than the animal tribe. Paint me an abstract human being, neither man nor a woman," said he, "and then I will agree to paint a tree that shall be no tree; and, if no man will buy it, perhaps the father of lies will take it off my hands, and hang it in the only place it would not disgrace."

In short, he never left off till he had crushed the non-buyers with eloquence and satire; but he could not crush them into buyers, — they beat him at the passive retort.

Poor Gatty, when the momentary excitement of argument had subsided, drank the bitter cup all must drink awhile, whose bark is alive and strong enough to stem the current down which the dead, weak things of the world are drifting, many of them into safe harbors.

And now he brought out his picture with a heavy heart.

"Now," said he to himself, "this gentleman will talk me dead, and leave me no richer in coin, and poorer in time and patience."

The picture was placed in a light, the visitor sat down before it.

A long pause ensued.

"Has he fainted?" thought Gatty, ironically; "he does n't gabble."

"If you do not mind painting before me," said the visitor, "I should be glad if you would continue whilst I look into this picture."

Gatty painted.

The visitor held his tongue.

At first the silence made the artist uneasy, but by degrees it began to give him pleasure; whoever this was, it was not one of the flies that had hitherto stung him, nor the jackdaws that had chattered him dead.

Glorious silence! he began to paint under its influence like one inspired.

Half an hour passed thus.

"What is the price of this work of art?"

"Eighty pounds."

"I take it," said his visitor, quietly.

What, no more difficulty than that? He felt almost disappointed at gaining his object so easily.

"I am obliged to you, sir; much obliged to you," he added, for he reflected what eighty pounds were to him just then.

"It is my descendants who are obliged to you," replied the gentleman; "the picture is immortal!"

These words were an epoch in the painter's life.

The grave, silent inspection that had preceded them, the cool, deliberate, masterly tone in which they were said, made them oracular to him.

Words of such import took him by surprise.

He had thirsted for average praise in vain.

A hand had taken him, and placed him at the top of the tree.

He retired abruptly, or he would have burst into tears.

He ran to his mother.

"Mother," said he, "I am a painter; I always thought so at bottom, but I suppose it is the height of my ideas makes me discontented with my work."

"What has happened?"

"There is a critic in my room. I had no idea there was a critic in the creation, and there is one in my room."

"Has he bought your picture, my poor boy?" said Mrs. Gatty, distrustfully.

To her surprise he replied: —

"Yes! he has got it; only eighty pounds for an immortal picture."

Mrs. Gatty was overjoyed, Gatty was a little sad; but, reviving, he professed himself glad; the picture was going to a judge.

"It is not much money," said he, "but the man has spoken words that are ten thousand pounds to me."

He returned to the room; his visitor, hat in hand, was about to go; a few words were spoken about the art of painting, this led to a conversation, and then to a short discussion.

The new-comer soon showed Mr. Charles Gatty his ignorance of facts.

This man had sat quietly before a multitude of great pictures, new and old, in England.

He cooled down Charles Gatty, Esq., monopolist of nature and truth.

He quoted to him thirty painters in Germany, who paint every stroke of a landscape in the open air, and forty in various nations who had done it in times past.

"You, sir," he went on, "appear to hang on the skirts of a certain clique, who handle the brush well, but draw ill, and look at nature through the spectacles of certain ignorant painters who spoiled canvas four hundred years ago.

"Go no further in that direction.

"Those boys, like all quacks, have one great truth which they disfigure with more than one falsehood.

"Hold fast their truth, which is a truth the world has always possessed, though its practice has been confined to the honest and laborious few.

"Eschew their want of mind and taste.

"Shrink with horror from that profane *culte de laideur*, that 'love of the lop-sided,' they have recovered from the foul receptacles of decayed art.'"

He reminded him further, that "Art is not imitation, but illusion; that a plumber and glazier of our day and a mediæval painter are more alike than any two representatives of general styles that can be found; and for the same reason, namely, that with each of these art is in its infancy; these two sets of bunglers have not learned how to produce the illusions of art."

To all this he added a few words of compliment on the mind, as well as mechanical dexterity, of the purchased picture, bade him good morning, and glided away like a passing sunbeam.

"A mother's blessing is a great thing to have, and to deserve," said Mrs. Gatty, who had rejoined her son.

"It is, indeed," said Charles. He could not help being struck by the coincidence.

He had made a sacrifice to his mother, and in a few hours one of his troubles had melted away.

In the midst of these reflections arrived Mr. Saunders with a note.

The note contained a check for one hundred and fifty pounds, with these lines, in which the writer excused himself for the amendment: "I am a painter myself," said he, "and it is impossible that eighty pounds can remunerate the time expended on this picture, to say nothing of the skill."

We have treated this poor boy's picture hitherto with just contempt, but now that it is gone into a famous collection, mind, we always admired it; we always said so, we take our oath we did; if we have hitherto deferred framing it, that was merely because it was not sold.

MR. GATTY'S PICTURE, AT PRESENT IN THE COLLECTION OF LORD IPSDEN!

There was, hundreds of years ago, a certain Bishop of Durham, who used to fight in person against the Scotch, and defeat them. When he was not with his flock, the northern wolves sometimes scattered it; but when the holy father was there, with his prayers and his battle-axe, England won the day!

This nettled the Scottish king, so he penetrated one day, with a large band, as far as Durham itself, and for a short time blocked the prelate up in his stronghold. This was the period of Mr. Gatty's picture.

Whose title was: —

"*Half Church of God, half Tower against the Scot.*"

In the background was the cathedral, on the towers of which paced to and fro men in armor, with the western sun glittering thereon. In the centre, a horse and cart, led by a boy, were carrying a sheaf of arrows, tied with a straw band. In part of the foreground was the prelate, in a half-

suit of armor, but bareheaded; he was turning away from the boy to whom his sinking hand had indicated his way into the holy castle, and his benignant glance rested on a child, whom its mother was holding up for his benediction. In the foreground the afternoon beams sprinkled gold on a long grassy slope, corresponding to the elevation on which the cathedral stood, separated by the river Wear from the group; and these calm beauties of Nature, with the mother and child, were the peaceful side of this twofold story.

Such are the dry details. But the soul of its charm no pen can fling on paper. For the stately cathedral stood and lived; the little leaves slumbered yet lived; and the story floated and lived, in the potable gold of summer afternoon.

To look at this painted poem was to feel a thrill of pleasure in bare existence; it went through the eyes, where paintings stop, and warmed the depths and recesses of the heart with its sunshine and its glorious air.

CHAPTER XIII.

"What is in the wind this dark night? Six Newhaven boats and twenty boys and hobbledehoys, hired by the Johnstones at half a crown each for a night's job."

"Secret service!"

"What is it for?"

"I think it is a smuggling lay," suggested Flucker, "but we shall know all in good time."

"Smuggling!" Their countenances fell; they had hoped for something more nearly approaching the illegal."

"Maybe she has fand the herrin'," said a ten-year-old.

"Haw! haw! haw!" went the others. "She find the herrin', when there's five hundred fishermen after them baith sides the Firrth."

The youngster was discomfited.

In fact the expedition bore no signs of fishing.

The six boats sailed at sundown, led by Flucker: he brought to on the south side of Inch Keith, and nothing happened for about an hour.

Then such boys as were awake saw two great eyes of light coming up from Granton; rattle went the chain cable, and Lord Ipsden's cutter swung at anchor in four fathom water.

A thousand questions to Flucker.

A single puff of tobacco-smoke was his answer.

And now crept up a single eye of light from Leith; she came among the boats; the boys recognized a crazy old cutter from Leith harbor, with Christie Johnstone on board.

"What is that brown heap on her deck?"

"A mountain of nets, — fifty stout herring-nets."

Tunc manifesta fides.

A yell burst from all the boys.

"He's gaun to tak us to Dunbar."

"Half a croown! ye're no blate."

Christie ordered the boats alongside her cutter, and five nets were dropped into each boat, six into Flucker's.

The depth of water was given them, and they were instructed to shoot their nets so as to keep a fathom and a half above the rocky bottom.

A herring net is simply a wall of meshes twelve feet deep, fifty feet long; it sinks to a vertical position by the weight of net twine, and is kept from sinking to the bottom of the sea by bladders or corks. These nets are tied to one another, and paid out at the stern of the boat. Boat and nets drift with the tide; if, therefore, the nets touched the rocks they would be torn to pieces, and the fisherman ruined.

And this saves the herring, — that fish lies hours and hours at the very bottom of the sea like a stone, and the poor fisherman shall drive with his nets a yard or two over a square mile of fish, and not catch a herring tail; on the other hand, if they rise to play

for five minutes, in that five minutes they shall fill seven hundred boats.

At nine o'clock all the boats had shot their nets, and Christie went alongside his Lordship's cutter; he asked her many questions about herring fishery, to which she gave clear answers, derived from her father, who had always been what the fishermen call a lucky fisherman; that is, he had opened his eyes and judged for himself.

Lord Ipsden then gave her blue lights to distribute among the boats, that the first which caught herring might signal all hands.

This was done, and all was expectation.

Eleven o'clock came, — no signal from any boat.

Christie became anxious: at last she went round to the boats; found the boys all asleep except the baddish boy; waked them up, and made them all haul in their first net. The nets came in as black as ink, no sign of a herring.

There was but one opinion; there was no herring at Inch Keith; they had not been there this seven years.

At last, Flucker, to whom she came in turn, told her he was going into two fathom water, where he would let out the bladders and drop the nets on their cursed backs.

A strong remonstrance was made by Christie, but the baddish boy insisted that he had an equal right in all her nets, and, setting his sail, he ran into shoal water.

Christie began to be sorrowful; instead of making money, she was going to throw it away, and the neer-do-weel Flucker would tear six nets from the ropes.

Flucker hauled down his sail, and unstepped his mast in two fathom water; but he was not such a fool as to risk his six nets; he devoted one to his experiment, and did it well; he let out his bladder line a fathom, so that one half his net would literally be higgledy-piggledy with the rocks, unless the fish were there *en masse*.

No long time was required.

In five minutes he began to haul in the net; first, the boys hauled in the rope, and then the net began to approach the surface. Flucker looked anxiously down, the other lads incredulously; suddenly they all gave a yell of triumph, — an appearance of silver and lightning mixed had glanced up from the bottom; in came the first two yards of the net, — there were three herrings in it. These three proved Flucker's point as well as three million.

They hauled in the net. Before they had a quarter of it in, the net came up to the surface, and the sea was alive with molten silver. The upper half of the net was empty, but the lower half was one solid mass of fish.

The boys could not find a mesh, they had nothing to handle but fish.

At this moment the easternmost boat showed a blue light.

"The fish are rising," said Flucker, "we 'll na risk nae mair nets."

Soon after this a sort of song was heard from the boat that had showed a light. Flucker, who had got his net in, ran down to her, and found, as he suspected, that the boys had not power to draw the weight of fish over the gunwale.

They were singing, as sailors do, that they might all pull together; he gave them two of his crew, and ran down to his own skipper.

The said skipper gave him four men.

Another blue light!

Christie and her crew came a little nearer the boats, and shot twelve nets.

The yachtsmen entered the sport with zeal. so did his Lordship.

The boats were all full in a few minutes, and nets still out.

Then Flucker began to fear some of these nets would sink with the weight of fish; for the herring die after a while in a net, and a dead herring sinks.

What was to be done?

They got two boats alongside the cutter, and unloaded them into her as

well as they could; but before they could half do this the other boats hailed them.

They came to one of them; the boys were struggling with a thing which no stranger would have dreamed was a net.

Imagine a white sheet, fifty feet long, varnished with red-hot silver: there were twenty barrels in this single net. By dint of fresh hands they got half of her in, and then the meshes began to break; the men leaned over the gunwale, and put their arms round blocks and masses of fish, and so flung them on board; and the codfish and dog-fish snapped them almost out of the men's hands like tigers.

At last, they came to a net, which was a double wall of herring; it had been some time in the water, and many of the fish were dead; they tried their best, but it was impracticable; they laid hold of the solid herring, and when they lifted up a hundred-weight clear of the water, away it all tore, and sank back again.

They were obliged to cut away this net, with twenty pounds sterling in her. They cut away the twine from the head-ropes, and net and fish went to the bottom.

All hands were now about the cutter; Christie's nets were all strong and new; they had been some time in the water; in hauling them up her side, quantities of fish fell out of the net into the water, but there were enough left.

She averaged twelve barrels a net.

Such of the yawls as were not quite full crept between the cutter and the nets, and caught all they wanted.

The projector of this fortunate speculation suddenly announced that she was very sleepy.

Flucker rolled her up in a sail, and she slept the sleep of infancy on board her cutter.

When she awoke it was seven o'clock in the morning, and her cutter was creeping with a smart breeze, about two miles an hour, a mile from Newhaven pier.

The yacht had returned to Granton, and the yawls, very low in the water, were creeping along like snails, with both sails set.

The news was in Edinburgh long before they landed.

They had been discerned under Inch Keith at the dawn.

And the manner of their creeping along, when there was such a breeze, told the tale at once to the keen, experienced eyes that are sure to be scanning the sea.

Donkey-carts came rattling down from the capital.

Merchants came pelting down to Newhaven pier.

The whole story began to be put together by bits, and comprehended.

Old Johnstone's cleverness was recalled to mind.

The few fishermen left at Newhaven were ready to kill themselves.

Their wives were ready to do the same good office for La Johnstone.

Four Irish merchants agreed to work together, and to make a show of competition, the better to keep the price down within bounds.

It was hardly fair, four men against one innocent unguarded female.

But this is a wicked world.

Christie landed, and proceeded to her own house; on the way she was met by Jean Carnie, who debarrassed her of certain wrappers, and a handkerchief she had tied round her head, and informed her she was the pride of Newhaven.

She next met these four little merchants, one after another.

And since we ought to dwell as little as possible upon scenes in which unguarded innocence is exposed to artful conspiracies, we will put a page or two into the brute form of dramatic dialogue, and so sail through it quicker.

1*st Merchant.* "Where are ye going, Meggie?"

Christie Johnstone. "If onybody asks ye, say ye dinna ken."

1*st Mer.* "Will ye sell your fish?"

Christie. "Suner than gie them."

1st Mer. "You will be asking fifteen shillin' the eran."

Christie. "And ten to that."

1st Mer. "Good morning."

2d Mer. "Would he not go over fifteen shillings? O, the thief o' the world! — I 'll give sixteen."

3d Mer. "But I 'll give eighteen."

2d Mer. "More fool you! Take him up, my girl."

Christie. "Twenty-five is my price the day."

3d Mer. "You will keep them till Sunday week and sell their bones."

[*Exeunt the three Merchants.*
Enter 4th Merchant.

4th Mer. "Are your fish sold? I 'll give sixteen shillings."

Christie. "I 'm seeking twenty-five, an' I 'm offered eighteen."

4th Mer. "Take it." [*Exit.*

Christie. "They hae putten their heads thegither."

Here Flucker came up to her, and told her there was a Leith merchant looking for her. "And, Custy," said he, there 's plenty wind getting up, your fish will be sair hashed; put them off your hands, I rede ye."

Christie. "Ay, lad! Flucker, hide, an' when I play my hand sae, ye 'll run in an' cry, 'Cirsty, the Irishman will gie ye twenty-two schellin the cran.'"

Flucker. "Ye ken mair than 's in the catecheesm, for as releegious as ye are."

The Leith merchant was Mr. Miller, and this is the way he worked.

Miller (*in a mellifluous voice*). "Are ye no fatigued, my deear?"

Christie (*affecting fatigue*). "Indeed, sir, and I am."

Miller. "Shall I have the pleasure to deal wi' ye?"

Christie. "If it 's your pleasure, sir. I 'm seekin' twenty-five schellin."

Miller (*pretending not to hear*). "As you are a beginner, I must offer fair; twenty schellin you shall have, and that 's three shillings above Dunbar."

Christie. "Wad ye even carted herrin with my fish caller fra' the sea? and Dunbar, — O fine! ye ken there 's nae herrin at Dunbar the morn; this is the Dunbar schule that slipped westward: I 'm the mairket, ye 'll hae to buy o' me or gang to your bed" (*here she signalled to Flucker*). "I 'll no be oot o' mine lang."

Enter Flucker hastily, crying: "Cirsty, the Irishman will gie ye twenty-two schellin."

"I 'll no tak it," said Christie.

"They are keen to hae them," said Flucker; and hastily retired, as if to treat further with the small merchants.

On this, Mr. Miller, pretending to make for Leith, said, carelessly, "Twenty-three shillings, or they are not for me."

"Tak the cutter's freight at a hundre' cran, an' I 'm no caring," said Christie.

"They are mine!" said Mr. Miller, very sharply. "How much shall I give you the day?"

"Auchty pund, sir, if you please, — the lave when you like; I ken ye, Mr. Miller."

Whilst counting her the notes, the purchaser said slyly to her: —

"There 's more than a hundred cran in the cutter, my woman."

"A little, sir," replied the vendor; "but, ere I could count them till ye by baskets, they would lose seven or eight cran in book,* your gain, my loss."

"You are a vara intelligent young person," said Mr. Miller, gravely.

"Ye had measured them wi' your walking-stick, sir; there 's just ae scale ye didna wipe off, though ye are a carefu' mon, Mr. Miller; sae I laid the bait for ye an' fine ye took it."

Miller took out his snuff-box, and tapping it said: —

"Will ye go into partnership with me, my dear?"

"Ay, sir!" was the reply. "When I 'm aulder an' ye 're younger."

At this moment the four merchants, believing it useless to disguise their

* Bulk.

co-operation, returned to see what could be done.

"We shall give you a guinea a barrel."

"Why, ye offered her twenty-two shillings before."

"That we never did, Mr. Miller."

"Haw! haw!" went Flucker.

Christie looked down and blushed.

Eyes met eyes, and without a word spoken all was comprehended and silently approved. There was no nonsense uttered about morality in connection with dealing.

Mr. Miller took an enormous pinch of snuff, and drew for the benefit of all present the following inference: —

Mr. Miller's Apothegm.

"Friends and neighbors! when a man's heed is gray with age and thoucht (*pause*), he's just fit to go to schule to a young lass o' twenty."

There was a certain middle-aged fishwife, called Beeny Liston, a tenant of Christie Johnstone's; she had not paid her rent for some time, and she had not been pressed for it; whether this, or the whiskey she was in the habit of taking, rankled in her mind, certain it is she had always an ill word for her landlady.

She now met her, envied her success, and called out in a coarse tone: —

"O, ye're a gallant quean; ye'll be waur than ever the noo."

"What's wrang, if ye please?" said the Johnstone, sharply.

Reader, did you ever see two fallow bucks commence a duel?

They strut round, eight yards apart, tails up, look carefully another way to make the other think it all means nothing, and, being both equally sly, their horns come together as if by concert.

Even so commenced this duel of tongues between these two heroines.

Beeny Liston, looking at everybody but Christie, addressed the natives who were congregating thus: —

"Did ever ye hear o' a decent lass taking the herrin' oot o' the men's mooths? — is yon a woman's pairt, I'm asking ye?"

On this, Christie, looking carefully at all the others except Beeny, inquired with an air of simple curiosity: —

"Can onybody tell me wha Liston Carnie's drunken wife is speakin' till? no to ony decent lass, though. Na! ye ken she wad na hae th' impudence!"

"O, ye ken fine I'm speakin' till yoursel'."

Here the horns clashed together.

"To me, woman?" (*with admirably acted surprise.*) "Oo, ay! it will be for the twa years' rent you're awin me. Giest!"

Beeny Liston. "Ye're just the impudentest girrl i' the toon, an' ye hae proved it the day" (*her arms akimbo*).

Christie (*arms akimbo*). "Me, impudent? how daur ye speak against my charäckter, that's kenned for decency o' baith sides the Firrth."

Beeny (*contemptuously*). "O, ye're sly enough to beguile the men, but we ken ye."

Christie. "I'm no sly, and" (*drawing near and hissing the words*) "I'm no like the woman Jean an' I saw in Rose Street, dead drunk on the causeway, while her mon was working for her at sea. If ye're no ben your hoose in ae minute, I'll say that will gar Liston Cairnie fling ye ower the pier-head, ye fool-moothed drunken leear — Scairt!" *

If my reader has seen and heard Mademoiselle Rachel utter her famous *Sortez*, in "Virginie," he knows exactly with what a gesture and tone the Johnstone uttered this word.

Beeny (*in a voice of whining surprise*). "Hech! what a spite Flucker Johnstone's dochter has taen against us."

Christie. "Scairt!"

Beeny (*in a coaxing voice, and moving a step*). "Aweel! what's a' your paession, my boenny woman?"

Christie. "Scairt!"

* A local word; a corruption from the French *Sortez.*

Beeny retired before the thunder and lightning of indignant virtue.

Then all the fishboys struck up a dismal chant of victory.

"Yoo-hoo — Custy 's won the day — Beeny 's scair*tit*," going up on the last syllable.

Christie moved slowly away towards her own house, but before she could reach the door she began to whimper, — little fool.

Thereat chorus of young Athenians chanted: —

"Yu-hoo! come back, Beeny, ye 'll maybe win yet. Custy 's away gree*tin*" (*going up on the last syllable*).

"I 'm no greetin, ye rude bairns," said Christie, bursting into tears, and retiring as soon as she had effected that proof of her philosophy.

It was about four hours later; Christie had snatched some repose. The wind, as Flucker prognosticated, had grown into a very heavy gale, and the Firth was brown and boiling.

Suddenly a clamor was heard on the shore, and soon after a fishwife made her appearance, with rather a singular burden.

Her husband, ladies; *rien que cela.*

She had him by the scruff of the neck; he was *dos-à-dos*, with his booted legs kicking in the air, and his fists making warlike but idle demonstrations, and his mouth uttering ineffectual bad language.

This worthy had been called a coward by Sandy Liston, and being about to fight with him, and get thrashed, his wife had whipped him up, and carried him away; she now flung him down, at some risk of his equilibrium.

"Ye are not fit to feicht wi' Sandy Liston," said she; "if ye are for feichtin, here 's for ye."

As a comment to this proposal, she tucked up the sleeves of her short gown. He tried to run by her; she caught him by the bosom, and gave him a violent push, that sent him several paces backwards; he looked half fierce, half astounded; ere he could quite recover himself, his little servant forced a pipe into his hand, and he smoked contented and peaceable.

Before tobacco the evil passions fall, they tell me.

The cause of this quarrel soon explained itself; up came Sandy Liston, cursing and swearing.

"What! ye hae gotten till your wife's; that 's the place for ye; — to say there 's a brig in distress, and ye 'll let her go on the rocks under your noses: but what are ye afraid o'? there 's na danger?"

"Nae danger!" said one of the reproached, "are ye fou?"

"Ye are fou wi' fear yoursel'; of a' the beasts that crawl the airth, a cooward is the ugliest, I think."

"The wifes will no let us," said one, sulkily.

"It 's the woman in your hairts that keeps ye," roared Sandy, hoarsely; "curse ye, ye are sure to dee ane day, and ye are sure to be ——!" (a past participle) "soon or late, what signifies when? Oh! curse the hour ever I was born amang sic a cooardly crew." (*Gun at sea.*)

"There!"

"She speaks till ye, hersel'; she cries for mairey; to think that, of a' that hear ye cry, Alexander Liston is the only mon mon enough to answer." (*Gun.*)

"You are mistaken, Mr. Alexander Liston," said a clear, smart voice, whose owner had mingled unobserved with the throng; "there are always men to answer such occasions; now, my lads, your boats have plenty of beam, and, well handled, should live in any sea; who volunteers with Alexander Liston and me?"

The speaker was Lord Ipsden.

The fishwives of Newhaven, more accustomed to measure men than poor little Lady Barbara Sinclair, saw in this man what in point of fact he was, — a cool, daring devil, than whom none more likely to lead men into mortal danger, or pull them through it, for that matter.

They recognized their natural ene-

my, and collected together against him, like hens at the sight of a hawk.

"And would you really entice our men till their death?"

"My life 's worth as much as theirs, I suppose."

"Nae! your life! it 's na worth a button; when you dee, your next kin will dance, and wha 'll greet? but our men hae wife and bairns to look till." (*Gun at sea.*)

"Ah! I did n't look at it in that light," said Lord Ipsden. He then demanded paper and ink; Christie Johnstone, who had come out of her house, supplied it from her treasures, and this cool hand actually began to convey a hundred and fifty thousand pounds away, upon a sheet of paper blowing in the wind; when he had named his residuary legatee, and disposed of certain large bequests, he came to the point, —

"Christie Johnstone, what can these people live on? two hundred a year? living is cheap here, — confound the wind!"

"Twa hundred? Fifty! Vile Count."

"Don't call me Vile Count. I am Ipsden, and my name 's Richard. Now, then, be smart with your names."

Three men stepped forward, gave their names, had their widows provided for, and went for their sou'westers, &c.

"Stay," said Lord Ipsden, writing. "To Christina Johnstone, out of respect for her character, one thousand pounds."

"Richard! dinna gang," cried Christie, "O, dinna gang, dinna gang, dinna gang; it 's no your business."

"Will you lend me your papa's Flushing jacket and sou'wester, my dear? If I was sure to be drowned, I 'd go!"

Christie ran in for them.

In the mean time, discomposed by the wind, and by feelings whose existence neither he, nor I, nor any one suspected, Saunders, after a sore struggle between the frail man and the perfect domestic, blurted out: —

"My Lord, I beg your Lordship's pardon, but it blows tempestuous."

"That is why the brig wants us," was the reply.

"My Lord, I beg your Lordship's pardon," whimpered Saunders.

"But, O my Lord, don't go; it 's all very well for fishermen to be drowned; it is their business, but not yours, my Lord."

"Saunders, help me on with this coat."

Christie had brought it.

"Yes, my Lord," said Saunders, briskly, his second nature reviving.

His Lordship, whilst putting on the coat and hat, undertook to cool Mr. Saunders's aristocratic prejudices.

"Should Alexander Liston and I be drowned," said he, coolly, "when our bones come ashore, you will not know which are the fisherman's, and which the Viscount's." So saying, he joined the enterprise.

"I shall pray for ye, lad," said Christie Johnstone, and she retired for that purpose.

Saunders, with a heavy heart, to the nearest tavern, to prepare an account of what he called "Heroism in High Life," large letters, and the usual signs of great astonishment!!!!!! for the "Polytechnic Magazine."

The commander of the distressed vessel had been penny-wise. He had declined a pilot off the Isle of May, trusting to fall in with one close to the port of Leith; but a heavy gale and fog had come on; he knew himself in the vicinity of dangerous rocks; and, to make matters worse, his ship, old and sore battered by a long and stormy voyage, was leaky; and, unless a pilot came alongside, his fate would be, either to founder, or run upon the rocks, where he must expect to go to pieces in a quarter of an hour.

The Newhaven boat lay in comparatively smooth water, on the lee side of the pier.

Our adventurers got into her, stepped the mast, set a small sail, and ran out! Sandy Liston held the sheet, passed once round the belaying-pin,

and whenever a larger wave than usual came at them, he slacked the sheet, and the boat, losing her way, rose gently, like a cork, upon seas that had seemed about to swallow her.

But seen from the shore it was enough to make the most experienced wince; so completely was this wooden shell lost to sight, as she descended from a wave, that each time her reappearance seemed a return from the dead.

The weather was misty, — the boat was soon lost sight of; the story remains ashore.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was an hour later; the natives of the New Town had left the pier, and were about their own doors, when three Buckhaven fishermen came slowly up from the pier; these men had arrived in one of their large fishing-boats, which defy all weather.

The men came slowly up; their petticoat trousers were drenched, and their neck-handkerchiefs and hair were wet with spray.

At the foot of the New Town they stood still and whispered to each other.

There was something about these men that drew the eye of Newhaven upon them.

In the first place a Buckhaven man rarely communicates with natives of Newhaven, except at the pier, where he brings in his cod and ling from the deep sea, flings them out like stones, and sells them to the fishwives; then up sail and away for Fifeshire.

But these men evidently came ashore to speak to some one in the town.

They whispered together; something appeared to be proposed and demurred to; but at last two went slowly back towards the pier, and the eldest remained, with a fisherman's long mackintosh coat in his hand which the others had given him as they left him.

With this in his hand, the Buckhaven fisherman stood in an irresolute posture; he looked down, and seemed to ask himself what course he should take.

"What 's wrang?" said Jean Carnie, who, with her neighbors, had observed the men; "I wish yon man may na hae ill news."

"What ill news wad he hae?" replied another.

"Are ony freends of Liston Carnie here?" said the fisherman.

"The wife 's awa' to Granton, Beeny Liston they ca' her, — there 's his house," added Jean, pointing up the row.

"Ay," said the fisherman, "I ken he lived there."

"Lived there!" cried Christie Johnstone: "O, what 's this?"

"Freends," said the man, gravely, "his boat is driving keel uppermost in Kircauldy Bay; — we passed her near enough to read the name upon her."

"But the men will have won to shore, please God?"

The fisherman shook his head.

"She 'll hae coupit a mile wast Inch Keith, an' the tide rinning aff the island an' a heavy sea gaun. This is a' Newhaven we 'll see of them" (*holding up the coat*) "till they rise to the top in three weeks' time."

The man then took the coat, which was now seen to be drenched with water, and hung it up on a line not very far from its unfortunate owner's house: then, in the same grave and subdued tone in which he had spoken all along, he said, "We are sorry to bring siccan a tale into your toon," and slowly moved off to rejoin his comrades, who had waited for him at no great distance. They then passed through the Old Town, and in five minutes the calamity was known to the whole place.

After the first stupor, the people in the New Town collected into knots, and lamented their hazardous calling, and feared for the lives of those that had just put to sea in this fatal gale

for the rescue of strangers, and the older ones failed not to match this present sorrow with others within their recollection.

In the middle of this, Flucker Johnstone came hastily in from the Old Town, and told them he had seen the wife, Beeny Liston, coming through from Granton.

The sympathy of all was instantly turned in this direction.

"She would hear the news."

"It would fall on her like a thunder-clap."

"What would become of her?"

Every eye was strained towards the Old Town, and soon the poor woman was seen about to emerge from it; but she was walking in her usual way, and they felt she could not carry her person so if she knew.

At the last house she was seen to stop and speak to a fisherman and his wife that stood at their own door.

"They are telling her," was then the cry.

Beeny Liston then proceeded on her way.

Every eye was strained.

No! they had not told her.

She came gayly on, the unconscious object of every eye and every heart.

The hands of this people were hard, and their tongues rude, but they shrunk from telling this poor woman of her bereavement, — they thought it kinder she should know it under her own roof, from her friends or neighbors, than from comparative strangers.

She drew near her own door.

And now a knot collected round Christie Johnstone, and urged her to undertake the sad task.

"You that speak sa learned, Christie, ye should tell her; we daur na."

"How can I tell her?" said Christie, turning pale. "How will I tell her? I 'se try."

She took one trembling step to meet the woman.

Beeny's eye fell upon her.

"Ay! here 's the Queen o' Newhaven," cried she, in a loud and rather coarse voice. "The men will hae ta leave the place now y' are turned fisherman, I daur say."

"O, dinna fleicht on me! dinna fleicht on me!" cried Christie, trembling.

"Mairey on us," said the other, "auld Flucker Johnstone's dochter turned humble. What next?"

"I 'm vexed for speaking back till ye the morn," faltered Christie.

"Hett," said the woman, carelessly, "let yon flea stick i' the wa'. I fancy I began on ye. Aweel, Cirsty," said she, falling into a friendlier tone; "it 's the place we live in spoils us, — Newhaven 's an impudent toon, as sure as deeth.

"I passed through the Auld Toon the noo, — a place I never speak in; an' if they did na glower at me as I had been a strange beast.

"They cam' to their very doors to glower at me; if ye 'll believe me, I thoucht shame.

"At the hinder end my paassion got up, and I faced a wife East-by, and I said, 'What gars ye glower at me that way, ye ignorant woman?' ye would na think it, she answered like honey itsel': 'I 'm askin' your paarrdon,' says she; and her mon by her side said, 'Gang hame to your ain hoose, my woman, and Gude help ye, and help us a' at our need,' the decent mon. 'It 's just there I 'm for,' said I; 'to get my mon his breakfast.'"

All who heard her drew their breath with difficulty.

The woman then made for her own house, but in going up the street she passed the wet coat hanging on the line.

She stopped directly.

They all trembled, — they had forgotten the coat, — it was all over; the coat would tell the tale.

"Aweel," said she, "I could sweer that 's Liston Carnie's coat, a droukit wi' the rain"; then she looked again at it, and added, slowly, "if I did na ken he has his away wi' him at the piloting." And in another moment she was in her own house, leaving

them all standing there half stupefied.

Christie had indeed endeavored to speak, but her tongue had cloven to her mouth.

Whilst they stood looking at one another, and at Beeny Liston's door, a voice that seemed incredibly rough, loud, and harsh jarred upon them; it was Sandy Liston, who came in from Leith, shouting: —

"Fifty pounds for salvage, lasses! is na thaat better than staying cooard-like aside the women?"

"Whisht! whisht!" cried Christie. "We are in heavy sorrow; puir Liston Cairnie and his son Willy lie deed at the bottom o' the Firrth."

"Gude help us!" said Sandy, and his voice sank.

"An', O Sandy, the wife does na ken, and it 's hairt-breaking to see her, and hear her; we canna get her tell 't; ye 're the auldest mon here; ye 'll tell her, will ye no, Sandy?"

"No, me, that I will not!"

"O yes; ye are kenned for your stoot heart, an' coorage; ye come fra' facing the sea an' wind in a bit yawl"

"The sea and the wind," cried he, contemptuously; "they be ——, I 'm used wi' them; but to look a woman i' the face, an' tell her her mon and her son are drowned since yestreen, I hae na coorage for that."

All further debate was cut short by the entrance of one who came expressly to discharge the sad duty all had found so difficult. It was the Presbyterian clergyman of the place; he waved them back. "I know, I know," said he, solemnly.

"Where is the wife?"

She came out of her house at this moment, as it happened, to purchase something at Drysale's shop, which was opposite.

"Beeny," said the clergyman, "I have sorrowful tidings."

"Tell me them, sir," said she, unmoved. "Is it a deeth?" added she, quietly.

"It is! — death, sudden and terrible; in your own house I must tell it you — (and may God show me how to break it to hér)."

He entered her house.

"Aweel," said the woman to the others, "it maun be some far-awa cousin, or the like, for Liston an' me hae nae near freends. Meg, ye idle hizzy," screamed she to her servant, who was one of the spectators, "your pat is no on yet; div ye think the men will no be hungry when they come in fra' the sea?"

"They will never hunger nor thirst ony mair," said Jean, solemnly, as the bereaved woman entered her own door.

There ensued a listless and fearful silence.

Every moment some sign of bitter sorrow was expected to break forth from the house, but none came; and amidst the expectation and silence the waves dashed louder and louder, as it seemed, against the dike, conscious of what they had done.

At last, in a moment, a cry of agony arose, so terrible that all who heard it trembled, and more than one woman shrieked in return, and fled from the door; at which, the next moment, the clergyman stood alone, collected, but pale, and beckoned. Several women advanced.

"One woman," said he.

Jean Carnie was admitted; and after a while returned.

"She is come to hersel'," whispered she; "I am no weel mysel'." And she passed into her own house.

Then Flucker crept to the door to see.

"O, dinna spy on her," cried Christie.

"O yes, Flucker," said many voices.

"He is kneelin'," said Flucker. "He has her hand, to gar her kneel tae, — she winna, — she does na see him, nor hear him; he will hae her. He has won her to kneel, — he is prayin, an' greetin aside her. I canna see noo, my een 's blinded."

"He 's a gude mon," said Christie,

"O, what wad we do without the ministers?"

Sandy Liston had been leaning sorrowfully against the wall of the next house; he now broke out: —

"An auld shipmate at the whale-fishing!!! an' noow we'll never lift the dredging sang thegither again, in yon dirty detch that's droowned him; I maun hae whiskey, an' forget it a'."

He made for the spirit-shop like a madman; but ere he could reach the door a hand was laid on him like a vice. Christie Johnstone had literally sprung on him. She hated this horrible vice, — had often checked him; and now it seemed so awful a moment for such a sin, that she forgot the wild and savage nature of the man, who had struck his own sister, and seriously hurt her, but a month before, — she saw nothing but the vice and its victim, and she seized him by the collar, with a grasp from which he in vain attempted to shake himself loose.

"No! ye'll no gang there at siccan a time."

"Hands off, ye daft jaud," roared he, "or there'll be another deeth i' the toon."

At the noise Jean Carnie ran in.

"Let the ruffian go," cried she, in dismay. "O Christie, dinna put your hand on a lion's mane."

"Yes, I'll put my hand on his mane, ere I'll let him mak a beast o' himsel'."

"Sandy, if ye hurt her, I'll find twenty lads that will lay ye deed at her feet."

"Haud your whisht," said Christie, very sharply, "he's no to be threetened."

Sandy Liston, black and white with rage, ground his teeth together, and said, lifting his hand, "Wull ye let me go, or must I tak my hand till ye?"

"No!" said Christie, "I'll no let ye go, *sae look me i' the face; Flucker's dochter, your auld comrade, that saved your life at Holy Isle, think o' his face, — an' look in mines, — an' strike me!!!*"

They glared on one another, — he fiercely and unsteadily; she firmly and proudly.

Jean Carnie said afterwards, "Her eyes were like coals of fire."

"Ye are doing what nae mon i' the toon daur; ye are a bauld, unwise lassy."

"It's you mak me bauld," was the instant reply. "I saw ye face the mad sea, to save a ship fra' the rocks, an' will I fear a mon's hand, when I can save" (*rising to double her height*) "my feyther's auld freend fra' the puir mon's enemy, the enemy o' mankind, the cursed, cursed drink? O Sandy Liston, hoow could ye think to put an enemy in your mooth to steal awa your brains!"

"This 's no Newhaven chat; wha lairns ye sic words o' power?"

"A deed mon!"

"I would na wonder, y' are no canny; she's ta'en a' the poower oot o' my body, I think." Then suddenly descending to a tone of abject submission, "What's your pleesure, Flucker Johnstone's dochter?"

She instantly withdrew the offensive grasp, and, leaning affectionately on his shoulder, she melted into her rich Ionic tones.

"It's no a time for sin; ye'll sit by my fire, an' get your dinner; a bonny haggis hae I for you an' Flucker, an' we'll improve this sorrowfu' judgment; an' ye'll tell me o' auld times, — o' my feyther dear, that likeit ye weel, Sandy, — o' the storrms ye hae weathered, side by side, — o' the muckle whales ye killed Greenland way, — an', abune a', o' the lives ye hae saved at sea, by your daurin an' your skell; an', O Sandy, will na that be better as sit an' poor leequid damnation doown your throat, an' gie awa the sense an' feeling o' a mon for a sair heed and an ill name?"

"I'se gang, my lamb," said the rough man, quite subdued; "I daur say whiskey will no pass my teeth the day."

And so he went quietly away, and sat by Christie's fireside.

Jean and Christie went towards the boats.

Jean, after taking it philosophically for half a minute, began to whimper.

"What 's wrang ?" said Christie.

"Div ye think my hairt 's no in my mooth wi' you gripping yon fierce robber ?"

Here a young fishwife, with a box in her hand, who had followed them, pulled Jean by the coats.

"Hets," said Jean, pulling herself free.

The child then, with a pertinacity these little animals have, pulled Christie's coats.

"Hets," said Christie, freeing herself more gently.

"Ye suld mairry Van Amburgh," continued Jean ; "ye are just such a lass as he is a lad."

Christie smiled proudly, was silent, but did not disown the comparison.

The little fishwife, unable to attract attention by pulling, opened her box, and saying, "Lasses, I 'll let ye see my presoner : hech ! he 's boenny !" pulled out a mouse by a string fastened to his tail, and set him in the midst for friendly admiration.

"I dinna like it, — I dinna like it !" screamed Christie ; "Jean, put it away, — it fears me, Jean !" This she uttered (her eyes almost starting from her head with unaffected terror) at the distance of about eight yards, whither she had arrived in two bounds that would have done no discredit to an antelope.

"Het," said Jean, uneasily, "hae ye coowed yon savage, to be scared at the wee beastie ?"

Christie, looking askant at the animal, explained : "A moose is an awesome beast, — it 's no like a mon !" and still her eye was fixed by fascination upon the four-footed danger.

Jean, who had not been herself in genuine tranquillity, now turned savagely on the little Wombwelless : "An' div ye really think ye are to come here wi' a' the beasts i' the Airk ? Come, awa ye go, the pair o' ye."

These severe words, and a smart push, sent the poor little biped off roaring, with the string over her shoulder, recklessly dragging the terrific quadruped, which made fruitless grabs at the shingle. — *Moral.* Don't terrify bigger folk than yourself.

Christie had intended to go up to Edinburgh with her eighty pounds, but there was more trouble in store this eventful day.

Flucker went out after dinner, and left her with Sandy Liston, who was in the middle of a yarn, when some one came running in and told her Flucker was at the pier crying for her. She inquired what was the matter. "Come, an' ye 'll see," was all the answer. She ran down to the pier. There was poor Flucker lying on his back ; he had slipped from the pier into a boat that lay alongside ; the fall was considerable ; for a minute he had been insensible, then he had been dreadfully sick, and now he was beginning to feel his hurt ; he was in great anguish ; nobody knew the extent of his injuries ; he would let nobody touch him ; all his cry was for his sister. At last she came ; they all made way for her ; he was crying for her as she came up.

"My bairn ! my bairn !" cried she, and the poor little fellow smiled, and tried to raise himself towards her.

She lifted him gently in her arms, — she was powerful, and affection made her stronger ; she carried him in her arms all the way home, and laid him on her own bed. Willy Liston, her discarded suitor, ran for the surgeon. There were no bones broken, but his ankle was severely sprained, and he had a terrible bruise on the loins ; his dark, ruddy face was streaked and pale ; but he never complained after he found himself at home.

Christie hovered round him, a ministering angel, applying to him with a light and loving hand whatever could ease his pain ; and he watched her with an expression she had never noticed in his eye before.

At last, after two hours' silence, he made her sit in full view, and then he spoke to her; and what think you was the subject of his discourse?

He turned to and told her, one after another, without preface, all the loving things she had done to him ever since he was five years old. Poor boy, he had never shown much gratitude, but he had forgotten nothing, literally nothing.

Christie was quite overcome with this unexpected trait; she drew him gently to her bosom, and wept over him; and it was sweet to see a brother and sister treat each other almost like lovers, as these two began to do, — they watched each other's eye so tenderly.

This new care kept the sister in her own house all the next day; but towards the evening, Jean, who knew her other anxiety, slipped in and offered to take her place for an hour by Flucker's side; at the same time she looked one of those signals which are too subtle for any but woman to understand.

Christie drew her aside, and learned that Gatty and his mother were just coming through from Leith; Christie ran for her eighty pounds, placed them in her bosom, cast a hasty glance at a looking-glass, little larger than an oyster-shell, and ran out.

"Hech! What pleased the auld wife will be to see, he has a lass that can mak auchty pund in a morning."

This was Christie's notion.

At sight of them she took out the bank-notes, and with eyes glistening and cheeks flushing she cried: —

"O Chairles, ye 'll no gang to jail, — I hae the siller!" and she offered him the money with both hands, and a look of tenderness and modesty that embellished human nature.

Ere he could speak, his mother put out her hand, and not rudely, but very coldly, repelling Christie's arm, said in a freezing manner: —

"We are much obliged to you, but my son's own talents have rescued him from his little embarrassment."

"A nobleman has bought my picture," said Gatty, proudly.

"For one hundred and fifty pounds," said the old lady, meaning to mark the contrast between that sum and what Christie had in her hand.

Christie remained like a statue, with her arms extended, and the bank-notes in her hand; her features worked, — she had much ado not to cry; and any one that had known the whole story, and seen this unmerited repulse, would have felt for her; but her love came to her aid, she put the notes in her bosom, sighed, and said: —

"I would hae likeit to hae been the first, ye ken, but I 'm real pleased."

"But, mother," said Gatty, "it was very kind of Christie all the same. O Christie!" said he, in a tone of despair.

At this kind word Christie's fortitude was sore tried; she turned away her head; — she was far too delicate to let them know who had sent Lord Ipsden to buy the picture.

Whilst she turned away, Mrs Gatty said in her son's ear: —

"Now, I have your solemn promise to do it here, and at once; you will find me on the beach behind these boats, — do it."

The reader will understand that during the last few days Mrs. Gatty had improved her advantage, and that Charles had positively consented to obey her; the poor boy was worn out with the struggle, — he felt he must have peace or die; he was thin and pale, and sudden twitches came over him; his temperament was not fit for such a battle; and, it is to be observed, nearly all the talk was on one side. He had made one expiring struggle, — he described to his mother an artist's nature, his strength, his weakness, — he besought her not to be a slave to general rules, but to inquire what sort of a companion the individual Gatty needed; he lashed with true but brilliant satire the sort of wife his mother was ready to see him saddled with, — a stupid, unsympathizing creature, whose ten children would,

by nature's law, be also stupid, and so be a weight on him till his dying day. He painted Christie Johnstone, mind and body, in words as true and bright as his colors; he showed his own weak points, her strong ones, and how the latter would fortify the former.

He displayed, in short, in one minute more intellect than his mother had exhibited in sixty years; and that done, with all his understanding, wit, and eloquence, he succumbed like a child, to her stronger will, — he promised to break with Christie Johnstone.

When Christie had recovered her composure and turned round to her companions, she found herself alone with Charles.

"Chairles," said she, gravely.

"Christie," said he, uneasily.

"Your mother does na like me. O, ye need na deny it; and we are na together as we used to be, my lad."

"She is prejudiced, but she has been the best of mothers to me, Christie."

"Aweel."

"Circumstances compel me to return to England."

(Ah, coward! anything but the real truth!)

"Aweel, Chairles, it will no be for lang."

"I don't know; you will not be so unhappy as I shall, — at least I hope not."

"Hoow do ye ken that?"

"Christie, do you remember the first night we danced together?"

"Ay."

"And we walked in the cool by the seaside, and I told you the names of the stars, and you said those were not their real names, but nicknames we give them here on earth. I loved you that first night."

"And I fancied you the first time I set eyes on you."

"How can I leave you, Christie? What shall I do?"

"I ken what I shall do," answered Christie, coolly; then, bursting into tears, she added, "I shall dee! I shall dee!"

"No! you must not say so; at least I will never love any one but you."

"An' I'll live as I am a' my days for your sake. O England! I hae likeit ye sae weel, ye suld na rob me o' my lad, — he's a' the joy I hae!"

"I love you," said Gatty. "Do you love me?"

All the answer was, her head upon his shoulder.

"I can't do it," thought Gatty, "and I won't! Christie," said he, "stay here, don't move from here." And he dashed among the boats in great agitation.

He found his mother rather near the scene of the late conference.

"Mother," said he, fiercely, like a coward as he was, "ask me no more, my mind is made up forever; I will not do this scoundrelly, heartless, beastly, ungrateful action you have been pushing me to so long."

"Take care, Charles, take care," said the old woman, trembling with passion, for this was a new tone for her son to take with her. "You had my blessing the other day, and you saw what followed it; do not tempt me to curse an undutiful, disobedient, ungrateful son."

"I must take my chance," said he, desperately: "for I am under a curse any way! I placed my ring on her finger, and held up my hand to God and swore she should be my wife; she has my ring and my oath, and I will not perjure myself even for my mother."

"Your ring! Not the ruby ring I gave you from your dead father's finger, — not that! not that!"

"Yes! yes! I tell you yes! and if he was alive, and saw her, and knew her goodness, he would have pity on me, but I have no friend; you see how ill you have made me, but you have no pity; I could not have believed it; but, since you have no mercy on me, I will have the more mercy on myself; I marry her to-morrow,

and put an end to all this shuffling and manœuvring against an angel! I am not worthy of her, but I 'll marry her to-morrow. Good by."

"Stay!" said the old woman, in a terrible voice; "before you destroy me and all I have lived for, and suffered, and pinched for, hear me; if that ring is not off the hussy's finger in half an hour, and you my son again, I fall on this sand and — "

"Then God have mercy upon me, for I 'll see the whole creation lost eternally, ere I 'll wrong the only creature that is an ornament to the world."

He was desperate; and the weak, driven to desperation, are more furious than the strong.

It was by Heaven's mercy that neither mother nor son had time to speak again.

As they faced each other, with flaming eyes and faces, all self-command gone, about to utter hasty words, and lay up regret, perhaps for all their lives to come, in a moment, as if she had started from the earth, Christie Johnstone stood between them!

Gatty's words, and, still more, his hesitation, had made her quick intelligence suspect: she had resolved to know the truth; the boats offered every facility for listening, — she had heard every word.

She stood between the mother and son.

They were confused, abashed, and the hot blood began to leave their faces.

She stood erect like a statue, her cheek pale as ashes, her eyes glittering like basilisks, she looked at neither of them.

She slowly raised her left hand, she withdrew a ruby ring from it, and dropped the ring on the sand between the two.

She turned on her heel, and was gone as she had come, without a word spoken.

They looked at one another, stupefied at first; after a considerable pause the stern old woman stooped, picked up the ring, and, in spite of a certain chill that the young woman's majestic sorrow had given her, said, placing it on her own finger, "This is for your wife!!!"

"It will be for my coffin, then," said her son, so coldly, so bitterly, and so solemnly, that the mother's heart began to quake.

"Mother," said he, calmly, "forgive me, and accept your son's arm."

"I will, my son!"

"We are alone in the world now, mother."

Mrs. Gatty had triumphed, but she felt the price of her triumph more than her victory. It had been done in one moment, that for which she had so labored, and it seemed that had she spoken long ago to Christie, instead of Charles, it could have been done at any moment.

Strange to say, for some minutes the mother felt more uneasy than her son; she was a woman, after all, and could measure a woman's heart, and she saw how deep the wound she had given one she was now compelled to respect.

Charles, on the other hand, had been so harassed backwards and forwards, that to him certainty was relief; it was a great matter to be no longer called upon to decide. His mother had said, "Part," and now Christie had said, "Part"; at least the affair was taken out of his hands, and his first feeling was a heavenly calm.

In this state he continued for about a mile, and he spoke to his mother about his art, sole object now; but after the first mile he became silent, *distrait;* Christie's pale face, her mortified air, when her generous offer was coldly repulsed, filled him with remorse: finally, unable to bear it, yet not daring to speak, he broke suddenly from his mother without a word, and ran wildly back to Newhaven; he looked back only once, and there stood his mother, pale, with her hands piteously lifted towards heaven.

By the time he got to Newhaven he was as sorry for her as for Christie. He ran to the house of the latter; Flucker and Jean told him she was on the beach. He ran to the beach! he did not see her at first, but, presently looking back, he saw her, at the edge of the boats, in company with a gentleman in a boating-dress. He looked—could he believe his eyes? he saw Christie Johnstone kiss this man's hand, who then, taking her head gently in his two hands, placed a kiss upon her brow, whilst she seemed to yield lovingly to the caress.

Gatty turned faint, sick; for a moment everything swam before his eyes; he recovered himself, they were gone.

He darted round to intercept them; Christie had slipped away somewhere; he encountered the man alone!

CHAPTER XV.

Christie's situation requires to be explained.

On leaving Gatty and his mother, she went to her own house. Flucker — who after looking upon her for years as an inconvenient appendage, except at dinner-time, had fallen in love with her in a manner that was half pathetic, half laughable, all things considered — saw by her face she had received a blow, and, raising himself in the bed, inquired anxiously, "What ailed her?"

At these kind words, Christie Johnstone laid her cheek upon the pillow beside Flucker's, and said: —

"O my laamb, be kind to your puir sister fra' this hoor, for she has naething i' the warld noo but yoursel'."

Flucker began to sob at this.

Christie could not cry; her heart was like a lump of lead in her bosom; but she put her arm round his neck, and at the sight of his sympathy she panted heavily, but could not shed a tear, — she was sore stricken.

Presently Jean came in, and, as the poor girl's head ached as well as her heart, they forced her to go and sit in the air. She took her creepie and sat, and looked on the sea; but, whether she looked seaward or landward, all seemed unreal; not things, but hard pictures of things, some moving, some still. Life seemed ended, — she had lost her love.

An hour she sat in this miserable trance; she was diverted into a better, because a somewhat less dangerous form of grief, by one of those trifling circumstances that often penetrate to the human heart, when inaccessible to greater things.

Willy the fiddler and his brother came through the town, playing as they went, according to custom; their music floated past Christie's ears like some drowsy chime, until, all of a sudden, they struck up the old English air, "Speed the Plough."

Now it was to this tune Charles Gatty had danced with her their first dance the night they made acquaintance.

Christie listened, lifted up her hands, and crying, —

"O, what will I do? what will I do?" burst into a passion of grief.

She put her apron over her head, and rocked herself, and sobbed bitterly.

She was in this situation when Lord Ipsden, who was prowling about, examining the proportions of the boats, discovered her.

"Some one in distress, — that was all in his way."

"Madam!" said he.

She lifted up her head.

"It is Christie Johnstone. I'm so glad; that is, I'm sorry you are crying, but I'm glad I shall have the pleasure of relieving you"; and his Lordship began to feel for a check-book.

"And div ye really think siller's a cure for every grief!" said Christie, bitterly.

"I don't know," said his Lordship; "it has cured them all as yet."

"It will na cure me, then!" and

she covered her head with her apron again.

"I am very sorry," said he; "tell me" (*whispering*), "what is it? poor little Christie!"

"Dinna speak to me; I think shame; ask Jean. O Richard, I'll no be lang in this warld!!!"

"Ah!" said he, "I know too well what it is now; I know, by sad experience. But, Christie, money will cure it in your case, and it shall, too; only, instead of five pounds, we must put a thousand pounds or two to your banker's account, and then they will all see your beauty, and run after you."

"How daur ye even to me that I'm seekin a lad?" cried she, rising from her stool; "I would na care suppose there was na a lad in Britain." And off she flounced.

"Offended her by my gross want of tact," thought the Viscount.

She crept back, and two velvet lips touched his hand. That was because she had spoken harshly to a friend.

"O Richard," said she, despairingly, "I'll no be lang in this warld."

He was touched; and it was then he took her head and kissed her brow, and said: "This will never do: my child, go home and have a nice cry, and I will speak to Jean; and, rely upon me, I will not leave the neighborhood till I have arranged it all to your satisfaction."

And so she went, — a little, a very, very little, comforted by his tone and words.

Now this was all very pretty; but then seen at a distance of fifty yards it looked very ugly; and Gatty, who had never before known jealousy, the strongest and worst of human passions, was ripe for anything.

He met Lord Ipsden, and said at once, in his wise, temperate way: —

"Sir, you are a villain!"

Ipsden. "*Plait-il?*"

Gatty. "You are a villain!"

Ipsden. "How do you make that out?"

Gatty. "But, of course, you are not a coward, too."

Ipsden (*ironically*). "You surprise me with your moderation, sir."

Gatty. "Then you will waive your rank, — you are a Lord, I believe, — and give me satisfaction."

Ipsden. "My rank, sir, such as it is, engages me to give a proper answer to proposals of this sort; I am at your orders."

Gatty. "A man of your character must often have been called to an account by your victims, so — so —" (hesitating) "perhaps you will tell me the proper course."

Ipsden. "*I* shall send a note to the castle, and the Colonel will send me down somebody with a mustache; I shall pretend to remember mustache, mustache will pretend he remembers me; he will then communicate with your friend, and they will arrange it all for us."

Gatty. "And, perhaps, through your licentiousness, one or both of us will be killed."

Ipsden. "Yes! but we need not trouble our heads about that, — the seconds undertake everything."

Gatty. "I have no pistols."

Ipsden. "If you will do me the honor to use one of mine, it shall be at your service."

Gatty. "Thank you."

Ipsden. "To-morrow morning?"

Gatty. "No. I have four days' painting to do on my picture, I can't die till it is finished; Friday morning."

Ipsden. "(He is mad.) I wish to ask you a question, you will excuse my curiosity. Have you any idea what we are agreeing to differ about?"

Gatty. "The question does you little credit, my Lord; that is to add insult to wrong."

He went off hurriedly, leaving Lord Ipsden mystified.

He thought Christie Johnstone was somehow connected with it; but, conscious of no wrong, he felt little disposed to put up with any insult, especially from this boy, to whom he had been kind, he thought.

His Lordship was, besides, one of

those good, simple-minded creatures, educated abroad, who, when invited to fight, simply bow, and load two pistols, and get themselves called at six; instead of taking down tomes of casuistry and puzzling their poor brains to find out whether they are game-cocks or capons, and why.

As for Gatty, he hurried home in a fever of passion, begged his mother's pardon, and reproached himself for ever having disobeyed her on account of such a perfidious creature as Christie Johnstone.

He then told her what he had seen, as distance and imagination had presented it to him; to his surprise the old lady cut him short.

"Charles," said she, "there is no need to take the girl's character away; she has but one fault, — she is not in the same class of life as you, and such marriages always lead to misery; but in other respects she is a worthy young woman, — don't speak against her character, or you will make my flesh creep; you don't know what her character is to a woman, high or low."

By this moderation, perhaps she held him still faster.

Friday morning arrived. Gatty had, by hard work, finished his picture, collected his sketches from nature, which were numerous, left by memorandum everything to his mother, and was, or rather felt, as ready to die as live.

He had hardly spoken a word, or eaten a meal, these four days; his mother was in anxiety about him. He rose early, and went down to Leith; an hour later, his mother, finding him gone out, rose, and went to seek him at Newhaven.

Meantime Flucker had entirely recovered, but his sister's color had left her cheeks; and the boy swore vengeance against the cause of her distress.

On Friday morning, then, there paced on Leith Sands two figures.

One was Lord Ipsden.

The other seemed a military gentleman, who having swallowed the mess-room poker, and found it insufficient, had added the ramrods of his company.

The more his Lordship reflected on Gatty, the less inclined he had felt to invite a satirical young dog from barracks to criticise such a *rencontre;* he had therefore ordered Saunders to get up as a Field-Marshal, or some such trifle, and what Saunders would have called incomparable verticality was the result.

The Painter was also in sight.

Whilst he was coming up, Lord Ipsden was lecturing Marshal Saunders on a point on which that worthy had always thought himself very superior to his master, — "Gentlemanly deportment."

"Now, Saunders, mind and behave like a gentleman, or we shall be found out."

"I trust, my Lord, my conduct — "

"What I mean is, you must not be so overpoweringly gentleman-like as you are apt to be; no gentleman is so gentleman-like as all that; it could not be borne, *c'est suffoquant;* and a white handkerchief is unsoldier-like, and nobody ties a white handkerchief so well as that; of all the vices, perfection is the most intolerable." His Lordship then touched with his cane the Generalissimo's tie, whose countenance straightway fell, as though he had lost three successive battles.

Gatty came np.

They saluted.

"Where is your second, sir?" said the Maréchal.

"My second?" said Gatty. "Ah! I forgot to wake him, — does it matter?"

"It is merely a custom," said Lord Ipsden, with a very slightly satirical manner. "Savanadero," said he, "do us the honor to measure the ground, and be everybody's second."

Savanadero measured the ground, and handed a pistol to each combatant, and struck an imposing attitude apart.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" said this Jack-o'-both-sides.

"Yes!" said both.

Just as the signal was about to be given, an interruption occurred. "I beg you pardon, sir," said Lord Ipsden to his antagonist; "I am going to take a *liberty*, — *a great liberty* with you, but I think you will find your pistol is only at half cock."

"Thank you, my Lord; what am I to do with the thing?"

"Draw back the cock so, and be ready to fire?"

"So?" *Bang!*

He had touched the trigger as well as the cock, so off went the barker; and after a considerable pause the Field-Marshal sprang yelling into the air.

"Hallo!" cried Mr. Gatty.

"Ah! oh! I'm a dead man," whined the General.

"Nonsense!" said Ipsden, after a moment of anxiety. "Give yourself no concern, sir," said he, soothingly, to his antagonist, — "a mere accident. — Maréchal, reload Mr. Gatty's pistol."

"Excuse me, my Lord —"

"Load his pistol directly," said his Lordship, sternly: "and behave like a gentleman."

"My Lord! my Lord! but where shall I stand to be safe?"

"Behind me!"

The Commander of Division advanced reluctantly for Gatty's pistol.

"No, my Lord!" said Gatty, "it is plain I am not a fit antagonist; I shall but expose myself, — and my mother has separated us; I have lost her, — if you do not win her, some worse man may; but oh! if you are a man, use her tenderly."

"Whom?"

"Christie Johnstone! O sir, do not make her regret me too much! She was my treasure, my consolation, — she was to be my wife, she would have cheered the road of life, — it is a desert now. I loved her — I — I —"

Here the poor fellow choked.

Lord Ipsden turned round, and threw his pistol to Saunders, saying, "Catch that, Saunders."

Saunders, on the contrary, by a single motion changed his person from a vertical straight line to a horizontal line, exactly parallel with the earth's surface, and the weapon sang innoxious over him.

His Lordship then, with a noble defiance of etiquette, walked up to his antagonist and gave him his hand, with a motion no one could resist; for he felt for the poor fellow.

"It is all a mistake," said he. "There is no sentiment between La Johnstone and me but mutual esteem. I will explain the whole thing: *I* admire *her* for her virtue, her wit, her innocence, her goodness, and all that sort of thing; and *she*, what *she* sees in *me*, I am sure I don't know," added he, slightly shrugging his aristocratic shoulders. "Do me the honor to breakfast with me at Newhaven."

"I have ordered twelve sorts of fish at the 'Peacock,' my Lord," said Saunders.

"Divine! (I hate fish) I told Saunders all would be hungry and none shot; by the by, you are winged, I think you said, Saunders?"

"No, my Lord! but look at my trousers."

The bullet had cut his pantaloons.

"I see, — only barked; so go and see about our breakfast."

"Yes, my Lord" (*faintly*).

"And draw on me for fifty pounds worth of — new trousers."

"Yes, my Lord" (*sonorously*).

The duellists separated, Gatty taking the short cut to Newhaven; he proposed to take his favorite swim there, to refresh himself before breakfast; and he went from his Lordship a little cheered by remarks which fell from him, and which, though vague, sounded friendly; — poor fellow, except when he had brush in hand he was a dreamer.

This Viscount, who did not seem to trouble his head about class dignity, was to convert his mother from

her aristocratic tendencies or something.

Que sais-je? what will not a dreamer hope?

Lord Ipsden strolled along the sands, and judge his surprise, when, attended by two footmen, he met at that time in the morning Lady Barbara Sinclair.

Lord Ipsden had been so disheartened and piqued by this lady's conduct, that for a whole week he had not been near her: this line of behavior sometimes answers.

She met him with a grand display of cordiality.

She inquired, "Whether he had heard of a most gallant action, that, coupled with another circumstance" (*here she smiled*) "had in part reconciled her to the age we live in?"

He asked for further particulars.

She then informed him "that a ship had been ashore on the rocks, that no fisherman dared venture out, that a young gentleman had given them his whole fortune, and so bribed them to accompany him; that he had saved the ship and the men's lives, paid away his fortune, and lighted an odious cigar, and gone home, never minding, amidst the blessings and acclamations of a maritime population."

A beautiful story she told him; so beautiful, in fact, that until she had discoursed ten minutes he hardly recognized his own feat; but when he did he blushed inside as well as out with pleasure. Oh! music of music, — praise from eloquent lips, and those lips the lips we love.

The next moment he felt ashamed; ashamed that Lady Barbara should praise him beyond his merits, as he conceived.

He made a faint hypocritical endeavor to moderate her eulogium; this gave matters an unexpected turn, Lady Barbara's eyes flashed defiance.

"I say it was a noble action, that one nursed in effeminacy (as you all are), should teach the hardy seamen to mock at peril, — noble fellow!"

"He did a man's duty, Barbara."

"Ipsden, take care, you will make me hate you, if you detract from a deed you cannot emulate. This gentleman risked his own life to save others, — he is a hero! I should know him by his face the moment I saw him. O that I were such a man, or knew where to find such a creature!"

The water came into Lord Ipsden's eyes; he did not know what to say or do; he turned away his head.

Lady Barbara was surprised; her conscience smote her.

"O dear," said she, "there now, I have given you pain — forgive me; we can't all be heroes; dear Ipsden, don't think I despise you now as I used. O no! I have heard of your goodness to the poor, and I have more experience now. There is nobody I esteem more than you, Richard, so you need not look so."

"Thank you, dearest Barbara."

"Yes, and if you were to be such a goose as to write me another letter proposing absurdities to me —"

"Would the answer be different?"

"Very different."

"O Barbara, would you accept?"

"Why, of course not; but I would refuse civilly!"

"Ah!"

"There, don't sigh; I hate a sighing man. I'll tell you something that I know will make you laugh." She then smiled saucily in his face, and said, "Do you remember Mr. * * *?"

L'effrontée! this was the earnest man.

But Ipsden was a match for her this time.

"I think I do," said he; "a gentleman who wants to make John Bull little again into John Calf; but it won't do."

Her ladyship laughed. "Why did you not tell us that on Inch Coombe?"

"Because I had not read 'The Catspaw' then."

"'The Catspaw?' Ah! I thought it could not be you. Whose is it?"

"Mr. Jerrold's."

"Then Mr. Jerrold is cleverer than you."

"It is possible."

"It is certain! Well, Mr. Jerrold and Lord Ipsden, you will both be glad to hear that it was, in point of fact, a bull that confuted the advocate of the Middle Ages; we were walking; he was telling me manhood was extinct except in a few earnest men who lived upon the past, its associations, its truth; when a horrid bull gave — O — such a bellow! and came trotting up. I screamed and ran — I remember nothing but arriving at the stile, and lo, on the other side, offering me his arm with *empressement* across the wooden barrier was — "

"Well?"

"Well! don't you see?"

"No — O — yes, I see! — fancy — ah! Shall I tell you how he came to get first over? He ran more earnestly than you."

"It is not Mr. Jerrold this time, I presume," said her satirical Ladyship.

"No! you cannot always have him. I venture to predict your Ladyship on your return home gave this mediæval personage his *congé*."

"No!"

"No?"

"I gave it him at the stile! Let us be serious, if you please; I have a confidence to make you, Ipsden. Frankly, I owe you some apology for my conduct of late; I meant to be reserved, — I have been rude, — but you shall judge me. A year ago you made me some proposals; I rejected them because, though I like you — "

"You like me?"

"I detest your character. Since then, my West India estate has been turned into specie; that specie, the bulk of my fortune, placed on board a vessel; that vessel lost, at least we think so, — she has not been heard of."

"My dear cousin."

"Do you comprehend that now I am cooler than ever to all young gentlemen who have large incomes, and" (holding out her hand like an angel) "I must trouble you to forgive me."

He kissed her lovely hand.

"I esteem you more and more," said he.

"You ought, for it has been a hard struggle to me not to adore you, because you are so improved, *mon cousin*."

"Is it possible? In what respect?"

"You are browner and charitabler; and I should have been very kind to you, — mawkishly kind, I fear, my sweet cousin, if this wretched money had not gone down in the 'Tisbe.'"

"Hallo!" cried the Viscount.

"Ah!" squeaked Lady Barbara, unused to such interjections.

"Gone down in what?" said Ipsden, in a loud voice.

"Don't bellow in people's ears. The 'Tisbe,' stupid," cried she, screaming at the top of her voice.

"Ri tum, ti tum, ti tum, tum, tum, tiddy, iddy," went Lord Ipsden, — he whistled a polka.

Lady Barbara (*inspecting him gravely*). "I have heard it at a distance, but I never saw how it was done before. *It is very, very pretty!!!!*"

Ipsden. "*Polkez-vous, madame?*"

Lady Barb. "*Si, je polke, Monsieur le Vicomte.*"

They polked for a second or two.

"Well, I dare say I am wrong," cried Lady Barbara, "but I like you better now you are a downright — ahem! — than when you were only an insipid non-intellectual — you are greatly improved."

Ips. "In what respects?"

Lady Barb. "Did I not tell you? browner and more impudent; but tell me," said she, resuming her sly, satirical tone, "how is it that you, who used to be the pink of courtesy, dance and sing over the wreck of my fortunes?"

"Because they are not wrecked."

"I thought I told you my specie is gone down in the 'Tisbe.'"

Ipsden. "But the 'Tisbe' has not gone down."

Lady Barb. "I tell you it is."

Ipsden. "I assure you it is not."

Lady Barb. "It is not?"

Ipsden. "Barbara! I am too happy, I begin to nourish such sweet hopes once more. O, I could fall on my knees and bless you for something you said just now."

Lady Barbara blushed to the temples.

"Then why don't you?" said she. "All you want is a little enthusiasm." Then recovering herself, she said: —

"You kneel on wet sand, with black trousers on; that will never be!!!"

These two were so occupied that they did not observe the approach of a stranger until he broke in upon their dialogue.

An Ancient Mariner had been for some minutes standing off and on, reconnoitring Lord Ipsden; he now bore down, and with great rough, roaring cordiality, that made Lady Barbara start, cried out: —

"Give me your hand, sir, — give me your hand, if you were twice a Lord.

"I could n't speak to you till the brig was safe in port, and you slipped away, but I 've brought you up at last; and — give me your hand again, sir. I say, is n't it a pity you are a Lord instead of a sailor?"

Ipsden. "But I am a sailor."

Ancient Mariner. "That ye are, and as smart a one as ever tied a true-lover's knot in the top; but tell the truth, — you were never nearer losing the number of your mess than that day in the old 'Tisbe.'"

Lady Barb. "The old 'Tisbe'! Oh!"

Ipsden. "Do you remember that nice little lurch she gave to leeward as we brought her round?"

Lady Barb. "O Richard!"

Ancient Mariner. "And that reel the old wench gave under our feet, north the pier-head. I would n't have given a washing-tub for her at that moment."

Ipsden. "Past danger becomes pleasure, sir. *Olim et hæc meminisse* — I beg your pardon, sir."

Ancient Mariner (*taking off his hat with feeling*). "God bless ye, sir, and send ye many happy days, and well spent, with the pretty lady I see alongside; asking your pardon, miss, for parting pleasanter company, — so I 'll sheer off."

And away went the skipper of the "Tisbe," rolling fearfully. In the heat of this reminiscence, the skipper of the yacht (they are all alike, blue water once fairly tasted) had lost sight of Lady Barbara; he now looked round. Imagine his surprise!

Her Ladyship was in tears.

"Dear Barbara," said Lord Ipsden, "do not distress yourself on my account."

"It is not your fe-feelings I care about; at least, I h-h-hope not; but I have been so unjust, and I prided myself so on my j-ju-justice."

"Never mind!"

"Oh! if you don't, I don't. I hate myself, so it is no wonder you h-hate me."

"I love you more than ever."

"Then you are a good soul! Of course you know I always *l*-esteemed you, Richard."

"No! I had an idea you despised me!"

"How silly you are! Can't you see? When I thought you were not perfection, which you are now, it vexed me to death; you never saw me affront any one but you?"

"No, I never did! What does that prove?"

"That depends upon the wit of him that reasons thereon." (Coming to herself.)

"I love you, Barbara! Will you honor me with your hand?"

"No! I am not so base, so selfish: you are worth a hundred of me, and here have I been treating you *de haut en bas*. Dear Richard, poor Richard. Oh! oh! oh!" (A perfect flood of tears.)

"Barbara! I regret nothing; this moment pays for all."

"Well, then, I will! since you keep pressing me. There, let me go; I must be alone; I must tell the sea how unjust I was, and how happy I am, and when you see me again you shall see the better side of your cousin Barbara."

She was peremptory. "She had her folly and his merits to think over," she said; but she promised to pass through Newhaven, and he should put her into her pony-phaeton, which would meet her there.

Lady Barbara was only a fool by the excess of her wit over her experience; and Lord Ipsden's love was not misplaced, for she had a great heart which she hid from little people. I forgive her!

The resolutions she formed in company with the sea, having dismissed Ipsden, and ordered her flunky into the horizon, will probably give our Viscount just half a century of conjugal bliss.

As he was going, she stopped him and said: "Your friend had browner hands than I have hitherto conceived possible. *To tell the truth,* I took them for the claws of a mahogany table when he grappled you, — is that the term? *C'est égal* — I like him — "

She stopped him again. "Ipsden, in the midst of all this that poor man's ship is broken. I feel it is! You will buy him another, if you really love me, — for I like him."

And so these lovers parted for a time; and Lord Ipsden with a bounding heart returned to Newhaven. He went to entertain his late *vis-à-vis* at the "Peacock."

Meantime a shorter and less pleasant *rencontre* had taken place between Leith and that village.

Gatty felt he should meet his lost sweetheart; and sure enough, at a turn of the road, Christie and Jean came suddenly upon him.

Jean nodded, but Christie took no notice of him; they passed him; he turned and followed them, and said, "Christie!"

"What is your will wi' me?" said she, coldly.

"I — I — How pale you are!"

"I am no very weel."

"She has been watching over muckle wi' Flucker," said Jean.

Christie thanked her with a look.

"I hope it is not — not — "

"Nae fears, lad," said she, briskly; "I dinna think that muckle o' ye."

"And I think of nothing but you," said he.

A deep flush crimsoned the young woman's brow, but she restrained herself, and said icily: "Thaat 's very gude o' ye, I 'm sure."

Gatty felt all the contempt her manners and words expressed. He bit his lips: the tear started to his eye. "You will forget me," said he: "I do not deserve to be remembered, but I shall never forget you. I leave for England: I leave Newhaven forever, where I have been so happy. I am going at three o'clock by the steamboat: won't you bid me good by?" he approached her timidly.

"Ay! that wull do," cried she; "Gude be wi' ye, lad; I wish ye nae ill." She gave a commanding gesture of dismissal; he turned away, and went sadly from her.

She watched every motion when his back was turned.

"That is you, Christie," said Jean; "use the lads like dirt, an' they think a' the mair o' ye."

"O Jean, my hairt 's broken. I 'm just deeing for him."

"Let me speak till him then," said Jean; "I 'll sune bring him till his marrow-banes"; and she took a hasty step to follow him.

Christie held her fast. "I 'd dee ere I 'd give in till them. O Jean! I 'm a lassie clean flung awa; he has neither hairt nor spunk ava, yon lad!"

Jean began to make excuses for him: Christie inveighed against him: Jean spoke up for him with more earnestness.

Now observe, Jean despised the poor boy.

Christie adored him.

So Jean spoke for him, because women of every degree are often one solid mass of tact; and Christie abused him, because she wanted to hear him defended.

CHAPTER XVI.

Richard, Lord Viscount Ipsden, having dotted the sea-shore with sentinels, to tell him of Lady Barbara's approach, awaited his guest in the "Peacock"; but, as Gatty was a little behind time, he placed Saunders sentinel over the "Peacock," and strolled eastward; as he came out of the "Peacock," Mrs. Gatty came down the little hill in front, and also proceeded eastward; meantime Lady Barbara and her escort were not far from the New Town of Newhaven, on their way from Leith.

Mrs. Gatty came down, merely with a vague fear. She had no reason to suppose her son's alliance with Christie either would or could be renewed, but she was a careful player and would not give a chance away; she found he was gone out unusually early, so she came straight to the only place she dreaded; it was her son's last day in Scotland. She had packed his clothes, and he had inspired her with confidence by arranging pictures, &c., himself; she had no idea he was packing for his departure from this life, not Edinburgh only.

She came then to Newhaven with no serious misgivings, for, even if her son had again vacillated, she saw that, with Christie's pride and her own firmness, the game must be hers in the end; but, as I said before, she was one who played her cards closely, and such seldom lose.

But my story is with the two young fishwives, who, on their return from Leith, found themselves at the foot of the New Town, Newhaven, some minutes before any of the other persons who, it is to be observed, were approaching it from different points; they came slowly in, Christie in particular, with a listlessness she had never known till this last week; for some days her strength had failed her, — it was Jean that carried the creel now, — before, Christie, in the pride of her strength, would always do more than her share of their joint labor: then she could hardly be forced to eat, and what she did eat was quite tasteless to her, and sleep left her, and in its stead came uneasy slumbers, from which she awoke quivering from head to foot.

Oh! perilous venture of those who love one object with the whole heart.

This great but tender heart was breaking day by day.

Well, Christie and Jean, strolling slowly into the New Town of Newhaven, found an assemblage of the natives all looking seaward; the fishermen, except Sandy Liston, were away at the herring fishery, but all the boys and women of the New Town were collected; the girls felt a momentary curiosity; it proved, however, to be only an individual swimming in towards shore from a greater distance than usual.

A little matter excites curiosity in such places.

The man's head looked like a spot of ink.

Sandy Liston was minding his own business, lazily mending a skait-net, which he had attached to a crazy old herring-boat hauled up to rot.

Christie sat down, pale and languid, by him, on a creepie that a lass who had been baiting a line with mussels had just vacated; suddenly she seized Jean's arm with a convulsive motion; Jean looked up, — it was the London steamboat running out from Leith to Granton Pier to take up her passengers for London. Charles Gatty was going by that boat; the look of mute despair the poor girl gave went to Jean's heart; she ran hastily from the group, and

cried out of sight for poor Christie.

A fishwife, looking through a telescope at the swimmer, remarked: "He 's coming in fast; he 's a gallant swimmer yon —"

"Can he dee 't?" inquired Christie of Sandy Liston.

"Fine thaat," was the reply; "he does it aye o' Sundays when ye are at the kirk."

"It 's no oot o' the kirk-window ye 'll hae seen him, Sandy, my mon," said a young fishwife.

"Rin for my glass ony way, Flucker," said Christie, forcing herself to take some little interest.

Flucker brought it to her, she put her hand on his shoulder, got slowly up, and stood on the creepie, and adjusted the focus of her glass; after a short view, she said to Flucker: —

"Rin and see the nock." She then levelled her glass again at the swimmer.

Flucker informed her the nock said "half eleven," — Scotch for "half past ten."

Christie whipped out a well-thumbed almanac.

"Yon nock 's aye ahint," said she. She swept the sea once more with her glass, then brought it together with a click, and jumped off the stool: her quick intelligence viewed the matter differently from all the others.

"Noow," cried she, smartly, "wha 'll lend me his yawl?"

"Hets! dinna be sae interferin, lassie," said a fishwife.

"Hae nane o' ye ony spunk?" said Christie, taking no notice of the woman. "Speak, laddies!"

"M' uncle's yawl is at the pierhead; ye 'll get her, my woman," said a boy.

"A schell'n for wha 's first on board," said Christie, holding up the coin.

"Come awa', Flucker, we 'll hae her schell'n"; and these two worthies instantly effected a false start.

"It 's no under your jackets," said Christie, as she dashed after them like the wind.

"Haw! haw! haw!" laughed Sandy.

"What 's her business picking up a mon against his will?" said a woman.

"She 's an awfu' lassie," whined another.

The examination of the swimmer was then continued, and the crowd increased; some would have it he was rapidly approaching, others that he made little or no way.

"Wha est?" said another.

"It 's a lummy," said a girl.

"Na! it 's no a lummy," said another.

Christie's boat was now seen standing out from the pier. Sandy Liston, casting a contemptuous look on all the rest, lifted himself lazily into the herring-boat and looked seaward. His manner changed in a moment.

"The Deevil!" cried he; "the tide 's turned! You wi' your glass, could you no see yon man 's drifting oot to sea?"

"Hech!" cried the women, "he 'll be drooned, — he 'll be drooned!"

"Yes; he 'll be drooned!" cried Sandy, "if yon lassie does na come alongside him deevelich quick, — he 's sair spent, I doot."

Two spectators were now added to the scene, Mrs. Gatty and Lord Ipsden. Mrs. Gatty inquired what was the matter.

"It 's a mon drooning," was the reply.

The poor fellow, whom Sandy, by aid of his glass, now discovered to be in a worn-out condition, was about half a mile east of Newhaven pierhead, and unfortunately the wind was nearly due east. Christie was standing north-northeast, her boat-hook jammed against the sail, which stood as flat as a knife.

The natives of the Old Town were now seen pouring down to the pier and the beach, and strangers were collecting like bees.

"After wit is everybody's wit!!!" — Old Proverb.

The affair was in the Johnstone's hands.

"That boat is not going to the poor man," said Mrs. Gatty, "it is turning its back upon him."

"She canna lie in the wind's eye, for as clever as she is," answered a fishwife.

"I ken wha it is," suddenly squeaked a little fishwife; "it's Christie Johnstone's lad; it's yon daft painter fr' England. Hech!" cried she, suddenly, observing Mrs. Gatty, "it's your son, woman."

The unfortunate woman gave a fearful scream, and, flying like a tiger on Liston, commanded him "to go straight out to sea and save her son."

Jean Carnie seized her arm. "Div ye see yon boat?" cried she; "and div ye mind Christie, the lass wha's hairt ye hae broken? aweel, woman, — *it's just a race between deeth and Cirsty Johnstone for your son.*"

The poor old woman swooned dead away; they carried her into Christie Johnstone's house, and laid her down, then hurried back, — the greater terror absorbed the less.

Lady Barbara Sinclair was there from Leith; and, seeing Lord Ipsden standing in the boat with a fisherman, she asked him to tell her what it was; neither he nor any one answered her.

"Why does n't she come about, Liston?" cried Lord Ipsden, stamping with anxiety and impatience.

"She'll no be lang," said Sandy; "but they'll mak a mess o' 't wi' ne'er a man i' the boat."

"Ye're sure o' thaat?" put in a woman.

"Ay, about she comes," said Liston, as the sail came down on the first tack. He was mistaken; they dipped the lug as cleverly as any man in the town could.

"Hech! look at her hauling on the rope like a mon," cried a woman. The sail flew up on the other tack.

"She's an awfu' lassie," whined another.

"He's awa," groaned Liston, "he's doon!"

"No! he's up again," cried Lord Ipsden; "but I fear he can't live till the boat comes to him."

The fisherman and the Viscount held on by each other.

"He does na see her, or maybe he'd tak hairt."

"I'd give ten thousand pounds if only he could see her. My God, the man will be drowned under our eyes. If he but saw her!!!"

The words had hardly left Lord Ipsden's lips, when the sound of a woman's voice came like an Æolian note across the water.

"Hurraih!" roared Liston, and every creature joined the cheer.

"She'll no let him dee. Ah! she's in the bows, hailing him an' waving the lad's bonnet ower her head to gie him coorage. Gude bless ye, lass; Gude bless ye!"

Christie knew it was no use hailing him against the wind, but the moment she got the wind she darted into the bows, and pitched in its highest key her full and brilliant voice; after a moment of suspense she received proof that she must be heard by him, for on the pier now hung men and women, clustered like bees, breathless with anxiety, and the moment after she hailed the drowning man, she saw and heard a wild yell of applause burst from the pier, and the pier was more distant than the man. She snatched Flucker's cap, planted her foot on the gunwale, held on by a rope, hailed the poor fellow again, and waved the cap round and round her head, to give him courage; and in a moment, at the sight of this, thousands of voices thundered back their cheers to her across the water. Blow, wind, — spring, boat, — and you, Christie, still ring life towards those despairing ears, and wave hope to those sinking eyes; cheer the boat on, you thousands that look upon this action; hurrah! from the pier;

hurrah! from the town; hurrah! from the shore; hurrah! now, from the very ships in the roads, whose crews are swarming on the yards to look; five minutes ago they laughed at you; three thousand eyes and hearts hang upon you now; ay, these are the moments we live for!

And now dead silence. The boat is within fifty yards, they are all three consulting together round the mast; an error now is death; his forehead only seems above water.

"If they miss him on that tack?" said Lord Ipsden, significantly, to Liston.

"He 'll never see London Brigg again," was the whispered reply.

They carried on till all on shore thought they would run over him, or past him; but no, at ten yards distant they were all at the sail, and had it down like lightning; and then Flucker sprang to the bows, the other boy to the helm.

Unfortunately, there were but two Johnstones in the boat; and this boy, in his hurry, actually put the helm to port, instead of to starboard. Christie, who stood amidships, saw the error; she sprang aft, flung the boy from the helm, and jammed it hard-a-starboard with her foot. The boat answered the helm, but too late for Flucker; the man was four yards from him as the boat drifted by.

"He 's a deed mon!" cried Liston, on shore.

The boat's length gave one more little chance; the after-part must drift nearer him, — thanks to Christie. Flucker flew aft; flung himself on his back, and seized his sister's petticoats.

"Fling yourself ower the gunwale," screamed he. "Ye 'll no hurt; I 'se haud ye."

She flung herself boldly over the gunwale; the man was sinking, her nails touched his hair, her fingers entangled themselves in it, she gave him a powerful wrench and brought him alongside; the boys pinned him like wild-cats.

Christie darted away forward to the mast, passed a rope round it, threw it the boys, in a moment it was under his shoulders. Christie hauled on it from the fore thwart, the boys lifted him, and they tumbled him, gasping and gurgling like a dying salmon, into the bottom of the boat, and flung net and jackets and sail over him, to keep the life in him.

Ah! draw your breath all hands at sea and ashore, and don't try it again, young gentleman, for there was nothing to spare; when you were missed at the bow two stout hearts quivered for you; Lord Ipsden hid his face in his two hands, Sandy Liston gave a groan, and, when you were grabbed astern, jumped out of his boat, and cried: —

"A gill o' whiskey for ony favor, for it 's turned me as seeck as a doeg." He added: "He may bless yon lassie's fowr banes, for she 's taen him oot o' Death's maw, as sure as Gude 's in heaven!"

Lady Barbara, who had all her life been longing to see perilous adventures, prayed, and trembled, and cried most piteously; and Lord Ipsden's back was to her, and he paid no attention to her voice; but when the battle was won, and Lord Ipsden turned and saw her, she clung to his arm and dried her tears; and then the Old Town cheered the boat, and the New Town cheered the boat, and the towns cheered each other; and the Johnstones, lad and lass, set their sail, and swept back in triumph to the pier; so then Lady Barbara's blood mounted and tingled in her veins like fire. "O, how noble!" cried she.

"Yes, dearest," said Ipsden. "You have seen something great done at last; and by a woman, too!"

"Yes," said Barbara, "how beautiful! oh! how beautiful it all is; only the next one I see I should like the danger to be over first, that is all."

The boys and Christie, the moment they had saved Gatty, up sail again for Newhaven; they landed in about three minutes at the pier.

Time.		
From Newhaven town to pier on foot	1 m.	30 sec.
First tack	5	30
Second tack, and getting him on board	4	0
Back to the pier, going free .	3	30
Total . .	14	30

They came in to the pier, Christie sitting quietly on the thwart after her work, the boy steering, and Flucker standing against the mast, hands in his pockets; the deportment this young gentleman thought fit to assume on this occasion was "complete apathy"; he came into port with the air of one bringing home the ordinary results of his day's fishing; this was, I suppose, to impress the spectators with the notion that saving lives was an every-day affair with La Famille Johnstone; as for Gatty, he came to himself under his heap of nets and jackets, and spoke once between Death's jaw and the pier.

"Beautiful!" murmured he, and was silent. The meaning of this observation never transpired, and never will in this world. Six months afterwards, being subjected to a searching interrogatory, he stated that he had alluded to the majesty and freedom of a certain *pose* Christie had adopted whilst hailing him from the boat; but, reader, if he had wanted you and me to believe it was this, he should not have been half a year finding it out, — *increduli odimus!* They landed, and Christie sprang on shore; whilst she was wending her way through the crowd, impeded by greetings and acclamations, with every now and then a lass waving her kerchief or a lad his bonnet over the heroine's head, poor Mrs. Gatty was receiving the attention of the New Town; they brought her to, they told her the good news, — she thanked God.

The whole story had spread like wildfire; they expostulated with her, they told her, now was the time to show she had a heart, and bless the young people.

She rewarded them with a valuable precept.

"Mind your own business!" said she.

"Hech! y' are a dour wife!" cried Newhaven.

The dour wife bent her eyes on the ground.

The people were still collected at the foot of the street, but they were now in knots, when in dashed Flucker, arriving by a short cut, and crying: "She does na ken, she does na ken, she was ower moedest to look, I daur say, and ye 'll no tell her, for he 's a blackguard, an' he 's just making a fule o' the puir lass, and if she kens what she has done for him, she 'll be fonder o' him than a coow o' her cauf."

"O Flucker! we maun tell her, it 's her lad, her ain lad, she saved," expostulated a woman.

"Did ever my feyther do a good turn till ye?" cried Flucker. "Aweel, then, ye 'll no tell the lassie, she 's weel as she is; he 's gaun t' Ennglaud the day. I cannie gie ye a' a hidin," said he, with an eye that flashed volumes of good intention, on a hundred and fifty people; "but I am feytherless and motherless, an' I can fa' on my knees an' curse ye a' if ye do us sic an ill turn, an' then ye 'll see whether ye 'll thrive."

"We 'll no tell, Flucker, ye need na curse us ony way."

His Lordship, with all the sharp authority of a skipper, ordered Master Flucker to the pier, with a message to the yacht; Flucker *qua* yachtsman was a machine, and went as a matter of course. "I am determined to tell her," said Lord Ipsden to Lady Barbara.

"But," remonstrated Lady Barbara, "the poor boy says he will curse us if we do."

"He won't curse me."

"How do you know that?"

"Because the little blackguard's grog would be stopped on board the yacht if he did."

Flucker had not been gone many

minutes before loud cheering was heard, and Christie Johnstone appeared convoyed by a large detachment of the Old Town; she had tried to slip away, but they would not let her. They convoyed her in triumph till they saw the New Town people, and then they turned and left her.

She came in amongst the groups, a changed woman, — her pallor and her listlessness were gone, — the old light was in her eye, and the bright color in her cheek, and she seemed hardly to touch the earth.

"I'm just droukit, lasses," cried she, gayly, wringing her sleeve. Every eye was upon her; did she know, or did she not know, what she had done?

Lord Ipsden stepped forward; the people tacitly accepted him as the vehicle of their curiosity.

"Who was it, Christie?"

"I dinna ken, for my pairt!"

Mrs. Gatty came out of the house.

"A handsome young fellow, I hope, Christie?" resumed Lord Ipsden.

"Ye maun ask Flucker," was the reply. "I could no tak muckle notice, ye ken," putting her hand before her eye, and half smiling.

"Well! I hear he is very good looking; and I hear you think so too."

She glided to him, and looked in his face. He gave a meaning smile. The poor girl looked quite perplexed. Suddenly she gave a violent start.

"Christie! where is Christie?" had cried a well-known voice. He had learned on the pier who had saved him, — he had slipped up among the boats to find her, — he could not find his hat, — he could not wait for it, — his dripping hair showed where he had been, — it was her love whom she had just saved out of Death's very jaws.

She gave a cry of love that went through every heart, high or low, young or old, that heard it. And she went to him, through the air it seemed; but, quick as she was, another was as quick; the mother had seen him first, and she was there. Christie saw nothing. With another cry, the very key-note of her great and loving heart, she flung her arms round — Mrs. Gatty, who was on the same errand as herself.

> "Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent;
> Hearts are not flint, and flint is rent."

The old woman felt Christie touch her. She turned from her son in a moment, and wept upon her neck. Her lover took her hand and kissed it, and pressed it to his bosom, and tried to speak to her; but all he could do was to sob and choke, — and kiss her hand again.

"My daughter!" sobbed the old woman.

At that word Christie clasped her quickly; and then Christie began to cry.

"I am not a stone," cried Mrs. Gatty. "I gave him life; but you have saved him from death. O Charles, never make her repent what she has done for you."

She was a woman after all; and prudence and prejudice melted like snow before her heart.

There were not many dry eyes, — least of all the heroic Lady Barbara's.

The three whom a moment had made one were becoming calmer, and taking one another's hands for life, when a diabolical sound arose, — and what was it but Sandy Liston, who, after furious resistance, was blubbering with explosive but short-lived violence? Having done it, he was the first to draw everybody's attention to the phenomenon; and affecting to consider it a purely physical attack, like a *coup de soleil*, or so on, he proceeded instantly to Drysel's for his panacea.

Lady Barbara enjoined Lord Ipsden to watch these people, and not to lose a word they said; and, after she had insisted upon kissing Christie, she went off to her carriage. And she too was so happy, she cried three distinct times on her way to Edinburgh.

Lord Ipsden, having reminded Gatty of his engagement, begged him to add his mother and Christie to the party, and escorted Lady Barbara to her phaeton.

So then the people dispersed by degrees.

"That old lady's face seems familiar to me," said Lord Ipsden, as he stood on the little natural platform by the "Peacock." "Do you know who she is, Saunders?"

"It is Peggy, that was cook in your Lordship's uncle's time, my Lord. She married a green-grocer," added Saunders, with an injured air.

"Hech! hech!" cried Flucker, "Christie has ta'en up her head wi' a cook's son."

Mrs. Gatty was ushered into the "Peacock," with mock civility, by Mr. Saunders. No recognition took place, each being ashamed of the other as an acquaintance.

The next arrival was a beautiful young lady, in a black silk gown, a plain but duck-like plaid shawl, who proved to be Christie Johnstone, in her Sunday attire.

When they met, Mrs. Gatty gave a little scream of joy, and said: "O my child; if I had seen you in that dress, I should never have said a word against you."

"Pars minima est ipsa puella sui!'

His Lordship stepped up to her, took off his hat, and said: "Will Mrs. Gatty take from me a commission for two pictures, as big as herself, and as bonny?" added he, doing a little Scotch. He handed her a check; and, turning to Gatty, added, "At your convenience, sir, *bien entendu*."

"Hech! it 's for five hundred pund, Chairles."

"Good gear gangs in little book," * said Jean.

"Ay, does it," replied Flucker, assuming the compliment.

"My Lord!" said the artist, "you treat Art like a prince; and she shall treat you like a queen. When the sun comes out again, I will work for you and fame. You shall have two things painted, every stroke loyally in the sunlight. In spite of gloomy winter and gloomier London, I will try if I can't hang nature and summer on your walls forever. As for me, you know I must go to Gerard Dow and Cuyp, and Pierre de Hoogh, when my little sand is run; but my handwriting shall warm your children's children's hearts, sir, when this hand is dust." His eye turned inwards, he walked to and fro, and his companions died out of his sight, — he was in the kingdom of art.

His Lordship and Jean entered the "Peacock," followed by Flucker, who merely lingered at the door to moralize as follows: —

"Hech! hech! isna thaat lamēntable? Christie's mon 's as daft as a drunk weaver."

But one stayed quietly behind, and assumed that moment the office of her life.

"Ay!" he burst out again, "*the resources of our art are still unfathomed! Pictures are yet to be painted that shall refresh men's inner souls, and help their hearts against the artificial world; and charm the fiend away, like David's harp!! The world, after centuries of lies, will give nature and truth a trial. What a paradise art will be, when truths, instead of lies, shall be told on paper, on marble, on canvas, and on the boards!!!*"

"Dinner 's on the boarrd," murmured Christie, alluding to Lord Ipsden's breakfast; "and I hae the charge o' ye," pulling his sleeve, hard enough to destroy the equilibrium of a flea.

"Then don't let us waste our time here. O Christie!"

"What est, my laddy?"

"I 'm so preciously hungry!!!!"

"C-way * then!"

Off they ran, hand in hand, sparks of beauty, love, and happiness flying all about them.

* Bulk.

* Come away.

CHAPTER XVII.

"There is nothing but meeting and parting in this world!" and you may be sure the incongruous personages of our tale could not long be together. Their separate paths had met for an instant, in one focus, furnished then and there the matter of an eccentric story, and then diverged forever.

Our lives have a general current, and also an episode or two; and the episodes of a commonplace life are often rather startling; in like manner this tale is not a specimen, but an episode of Lord Ipsden and Lady Barbara, who soon after this married and lived like the rest of the *beau monde*. In so doing, they passed out of my hands; such as wish to know how Viscounts and Viscountesses feed, and sleep, and do the domestic (so called), and the social (so called), are referred to the fashionable novel. To Mr. Saunders, for instance, who has in the press one of those cerberus-leviathans of fiction, so common now; incredible as folio to future ages. Saunders will take you by the hand, and lead you over carpets two inches thick, — under rosy curtains, — to dinner-tables. He will fête you, and opera you, and dazzle your young imagination with *épergnes*, and salvers, and buhl, and ormolu. No fishwives or painters shall intrude upon his polished scenes; all shall be as genteel as himself. Saunders is a good authority; he is more in the society, and far more in the confidence of the great, than most fashionable novelists. Mr. Saunders's work will be in three volumes; nine hundred and ninety pages!!!!!!

In other words, this single work, of this ingenious writer, will equal in bulk the aggregate of all the writings extant by Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and St. Paul!!!

I shall not venture into competition with this behemoth of the *salon;* I will evaporate in thin generalities.

Lord Ipsden then lived very happily with Lady Barbara, whose hero he straightway became, and who nobly and poetically dotes upon him. He has gone into political life to please her, and will remain there — to please himself. They were both very grateful to Newhaven; when they married they vowed to visit it twice a year, and mingle a fortnight's simple life with its simple scenes; but four years have passed, and they have never been there again, and I dare say never will; but when Viscount Ipsden falls in with a brother aristocrat, who is crushed by the fiend *ennui*, he remembers Aberford, and condenses his famous recipe into a two-edged hexameter, which will make my learned reader laugh, for it is full of wisdom: —

"Diluculo surgas! miseris succurrere discas!'"

Flucker Johnstone meditated during breakfast upon the five hundred pounds, and regretted he had not years ago adopted Mr. Gatty's profession; some days afterwards he invited his sister to a conference. Chairs being set, Mr. Flucker laid down this observation, that near relations should be deuced careful not to cast discredit upon one another; that now his sister was to be a lady, it was repugnant to his sense of right to be a fisherman and make her ladyship blush for him; on the contrary, he felt it his duty to rise to such high consideration that she should be proud of him.

Christie acquiesced at once in this position, but professed herself embarrassed to know how such a "ne'er-do-weel" was to be made a source of pride; then she kissed Flucker, and said, in a tone somewhat inconsistent with the above, "Tell me, my laamb!"

Her lamb informed her that the sea has many paths; some of them disgraceful, such as line or net fishing, and the periodical laying down, on rocky shoals, and taking up again, of lobster-creels; others, superior to

anything the dry land can offer in importance and dignity and general estimation, such as the command of a merchant vessel trading to the East or West Indies. Her lamb then suggested that if she would be so good as to launch him in the merchant-service, with a good rig of clothes and money in his pocket, there was that in his head which would enable him to work to windward of most of his contemporaries. He bade her calculate upon the following results: in a year or two he would be second mate, and next year first mate, and in a few years more skipper! Think of that, lass! Skipper of a vessel, whose rig he generously left his sister free to determine; premising that two masts were, in his theory of navigation, indispensable, and that three were a great deal more like Cocker than two. This led to a general consultation; Flucker's ambition was discussed and praised. That modest young gentleman, in spite of many injunctions to the contrary, communicated his sister's plans for him to Lord Ipsden, and affected to doubt their prudence. The bait took; Lord Ipsden wrote to his man of business, and an unexpected blow fell upon the ingenious Flucker. He was sent to school; there to learn a little astronomy, a little navigation, a little seamanship, a little manners, &c.; in the mysteries of reading and writing his sister had already perfected him by dint of "the taws." This school was a blow; but Flucker was no fool; he saw there was no way of getting from school to sea without working. So he literally worked out to sea. His first voyage was distinguished by the following peculiarities: attempts to put tricks upon this particular novice generally ended in the laugh turning against the experimenters; and instead of drinking his grog, which he hates, he secreted it, and sold it for various advantages. He has been now four voyages; when he comes ashore, instead of going to haunts of folly and vice, he instantly bears up for his sister's house, — Kensington Gravel-pits, — which he makes in the following manner: he goes up the river, — Heaven knows where all, — this he calls running down the longitude; then he lands, and bears down upon the Gravel-pits; in particular knowledge of the names of streets he is deficient, but he knows the exact bearings of Christie's dwelling. He tacks and wears according as masonry compels him, and he arrives at the gate. He hails the house, in a voice that brings all the inhabitants of the row to their windows, including Christie; he is fallen upon and dragged into the house. The first thing is, he draws out from his boots, and his back, and other hiding-places, China crape and marvellous silk handkerchiefs for Christie; and she takes from his pocket a mass of Oriental sugar-plums, with which, but for this precaution, she knows by experience he would poison young Charley; and soon he is to be seen sitting with his hand in his sister's, and she looking like a mother upon his handsome, weather-beaten face, and Gatty opposite, adoring him as a specimen of male beauty, and sometimes making furtive sketches of him. And then the tales he always brings with him; the house is never very dull, but it is livelier than ever when this inexhaustible sailor casts anchor in it.

The friends (chiefly artists) who used to leave at 9-30, stay till eleven; for an intelligent sailor is better company than two lawyers, two bishops, three soldiers, and four writers of plays and tales, all rolled together. And still he tells Christie he shall command a vessel some day, and leads her to the most cheering inferences from the fact of his prudence and his general width-awake; in particular he bids her contrast with him the general fate of sailors, eaten up by land-sharks, particularly of the female gender, whom he demonstrates to be the worst enemies poor Jack has; he

calls these sunken rocks, fire-ships, and other metaphors. He concludes thus: "You are all the lass I mean to have, till I'm a skipper, and then I'll bear up alongside some pretty, decent lass, like yourself, Christie, and we'll sail in company all our lives, let the wind blow high or low." Such is the gracious Flucker become in his twentieth year. Last voyage, with Christie's aid, he produced a sextant of his own, and "made it twelve o'clock" (with the sun's consent, I hope), and the eyes of authority fell upon him. So, who knows? perhaps he may one day sail a ship; and, if he does, he will be prouder and happier than if we made him monarch of the globe.

To return to our chiefs; Mrs. Gatty gave her formal consent to her son's marriage with Christie Johnstone.

There were examples. Aristocracy had ere now condescended to wealth; earls had married women rich by tallow-importing papas; and no doubt, had these same earls been consulted in Gatty's case, they would have decided that Christie Johnstone, with her real and funded property, was not a villanous match for a green-grocer's son, without a rapp*; but Mrs. Gatty did not reason so, did not reason at all, luckily, her heart ran away with her judgment, and, her judgment ceasing to act, she became a wise woman.

The case was peculiar. Gatty was an artist *pur sang*, — and Christie, who would not have been the wife for a *petit maître*, was the wife of wives for him.

He wanted a beautiful wife to embellish his canvas, disfigured hitherto by an injudicious selection of models; a virtuous wife to be his crown; a prudent wife to save him from ruin; a cheerful wife to sustain his spirits, drooping at times by virtue of his artist's temperament; an intellectual wife to preserve his children from being born dolts, and bred dunces, and to keep his own mind from sharpening to one point, and so contracting and becoming monomaniacal: and he found all these qualities, together with the sun and moon of human existence, — true love and true religion, — in Christie Johnstone.

In similar cases, foolish men have set to work to make, in six months, their diamond of nature, the exact cut and gloss of other men's pastes, and, nervously watching the process, have suffered torture; luckily Charles Gatty was not wise enough for this; he saw nature had distinguished her he loved beyond her fellows; here, as elsewhere, he had faith in nature, — he believed that Christie would charm everybody of eye, and ear, and mind, and heart, that approached her; he admired her as she was, and left her to polish herself, if she chose. He did well; she came to London with a fine mind, a broad brogue, a delicate ear; she observed how her husband's friends spoke, and in a very few months she had toned down her Scotch to a rich Ionic coloring, which her womanly instinct will never let her exchange for the thin, vinegar accents that are too prevalent in English and French society; and in other respects she caught, by easy gradation, the tone of the new society to which her marriage introduced her, without, however, losing her charming self.

The wise dowager lodges hard by, having resisted an invitation to be in the same house; she comes to that house to assist the young wife with her experience, and to be welcome, — not to interfere every minute, and tease her; she loves her daughter-in-law almost as much as she does her son, and she is happy because he bids fair to be an immortal painter, and, above all, a gentleman; and she, a wifely wife, a motherly mother, and, above all, a lady.

This, then, is a happy couple. Their life is full of purpose and industry, yet lightened by gayety; they go to operas, theatres, and balls, for they are young. They have plenty of society, real society, not the ill-as-

* A diminutive German coin.

sorted collection of a predetermined number of bodies, that blindly assumes that name, but the rich communication of various and fertile minds; they very, very seldom consent to squat four mortal hours on one chair (like old hares stiffening in their hot forms), and nibbling, sipping, and twaddling, in four mortal hours, what could have been eaten, drunken, and said, in thirty-five minutes. They are both artists at heart, and it shocks their natures to see folks mix so very largely the *inutile* with the *insipidum*, and waste, at one huge but barren incubation, the soul, and the stomach, and the irrevocable hours, things with which so much is to be done. But they have many desirable acquaintances, and not a few friends; the latter are mostly lovers of truth in their several departments, and in all things: among them are painters, sculptors, engineers, writers, conversers, thinkers; these acknowledging, even in England, other gods besides the intestines, meet often *chez* Gatty, chiefly for mental intercourse; a cup of tea with such is found, by experience, to be better than a stalled elk where chit-chat reigns over the prostrate hours.

This, then, is a happy couple; the very pigeons and the crows need not blush for the nest at Kensington Gravel-pits. There the divine institution Marriage takes its natural colors, and it is at once pleasant and good to catch such glimpses of Heaven's design, and sad to think how often this great boon, accorded by God to man and woman, must have been abused and perverted, ere it could have sunk to be the standing butt of farce-writers, and the theme of weekly punsters.

In this pair we see the wonders a male and female can do for each other in the sweet bond of holy wedlock. In that blessed relation alone two interests are really one, and two hearts lie safe at anchor side by side.

Christie and Charles are friends, — for they are man and wife.

Christie and Charles are lovers still, — for they are man and wife.

Christie and Charles are one forever, — for they are man and wife.

This wife brightens the house, from kitchen to garret, for her husband; this husband works like a king for his wife's comfort, and for his own fame, — and that fame is his wife's glory. When one of these expresses or hints a wish, the other's first impulse is to find the means, not the objections.

They share all troubles, and, by sharing, halve them.

They share all pleasures, and, by sharing, double them.

They climb the hill together now, and many a canty day they shall have with one another; and when, by the inevitable law, they begin to descend towards the dark valley, they will still go hand in hand, smiling so tenderly, and supporting each other, with a care more lovely than when the arm was strong and the foot firm.

On these two temperate lives old age will descend lightly, gradually, gently, and late, — and late upon these evergreen hearts, because they are not tuned to some selfish, isolated key; these hearts beat and ring with the young hearts of their dear children, and years hence papa and mamma will begin life hopefully, wishfully, warmly again with each loved novice in turn.

And when old age does come, it will be no calamity to these, as it is to you, poor battered beau, laughed at by the fair ninnies who erst laughed with you; to you, poor follower of salmon, fox, and pheasant, whose joints are stiffening, whose nerve is gone, — whose Golgotha remains; to you, poor faded beauty, who have staked all upon man's appetite, and not accumulated goodness or sense for your second course; to you, poor drawing-room wit, whose sarcasm has turned to venom and is turning to drivel.

What terrors has old age for this happy pair? it cannot make them ugly, for, though the purple light of

youth recedes, a new kind of tranquil beauty, the aloe-blossom of many years of innocence, comes to, and sits like a dove upon, the aged faces, where goodness, sympathy, and intelligence have harbored together so long; and where evil passions have flitted (for we are all human), but found no resting-place.

Old age is no calamity to them: it cannot terrify them; for ere they had been married a week the woman taught the man, lover of truth, to search for the highest and greatest truths in a book written for men's souls by the Author of the world, the sea, the stars, the sun, the soul; and this book, *Dei gratia*, will, as the good bishop sings,

"Teach them to live that they may dread
The grave as little as their bed."

It cannot make them sad, for, ere it comes, loved souls will have gone from earth, and from their tender bosom, but not from their memories; and will seem to beckon them now across the cold valley to the golden land.

It cannot make them sad, for on earth the happiest must drink a sorrowful cup more than once in a long life, and so their brightest hopes will have come to dwell habitually on things beyond the grave; and the great painter, *jam Senex*, will chiefly meditate upon a richer landscape, and brighter figures than human hand has ever painted; a scene whose glories he can see from hence but by glimpses and through a glass darkly; the great meadows on the other side of Jordan, which are bright with the spirits of the just that walk there, and are warmed with an eternal sun, and ring with the triumph of the humble and the true, and the praises of God forever.

NOTE.

This story was written three years ago, and one or two topics in it are not treated exactly as they would be if written by the same hand to-day. But if the author had retouched those pages with his colors of 1853, he would (he thinks) have destroyed the only merit they have, viz. that of containing genuine contemporaneous verdicts upon a cant that was flourishing like a peony, and a truth that was struggling for bare life, in the year of truth 1850.

He prefers to deal fairly with the public, and, with this explanation and apology, to lay at its feet a faulty but genuine piece of work

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER I.

IT is the London Season! Come into the country! It is hot, and dusty, and muddy here; and this opening of all the drains, which is to bridle all the disorders by and by, poisons us dead meanwhile, O Board of Health! Come into the country!

In Oxfordshire, about two miles from the Thames, and on the skirts of the beech forest that lies between Wallingford and Hendley, stands an irregular farm-house; it looks like two houses forced to pass for one; for one part of it is all gables, and tile, and chimney-corners, and antiquity; the other is square, slated, and of the newest cut outside and in. The whole occupies one entire side of its own farm-yard, being separated from the straw only by a small Rubicon of gravel and a green railing; though at its back, out of the general view, is a pretty garden.

In this farm-house and its neighborhood the events of my humble story passed, a very few years ago.

Mrs. Mayfield, proprietor of the farm, had built the new part of the house for herself, though she did little more than sleep in it. In the antique part lived her cousin, old Farmer Hathorn, with his wife and his son Robert. Hathorn was himself proprietor of a little land two miles off, but farmed Mrs. Mayfield's acres upon some friendly agreement, which they contrived to understand, but few else could, least of all a shrewd lawyer.

The truth is, the inmates, like the house, were a little behind their age: they had no relations that were not contained within these four walls, and the feeling and tie of blood was very strong between them all.

The Hathorns had one son, Robert, a character; he was silent, and passed with some for sulky; but he was not sulky, only reserved and thoughtful; he was, perhaps, a little more devoid of all levity than becomes a young man. He had great force and weight of character; you might see that in his brow, and his steady manner, free from flourishes. With the Hathorns lived Mr. Casenower, a retired London tradesman. This gentleman had been bought out of a London firm for his scientific way of viewing things: they had lost such lots of money by it.

He had come to the Hathorns for a month, and had now been with them a year, with no intention, on either side, of parting yet awhile. This good accord did not prevent a perpetual strife of opinions between Casenower and old Hathorn. Casenower, the science-bitten, had read all the books chemists wrote on agriculture, and permitted himself to believe every word. Hathorn read nothing on agriculture, but the sheep, the soil, the markets, and the clouds, &c., and sometimes read them wrong, but not so very often.

Rose Mayfield was a young widow, fresh, free, high-spirited, and jovial; she was fond of company, and its life and soul wherever she was. She loved

flirtation, and she loved work; and when she could not combine them she would take them by turns; she would leave the farm every now and then, go to a friend at Oxford, Reading, or Abingdon, and flirt like wildfire for a fortnight; then she would return to the farm, and men, boys, horses, and work would seem to go more lively before she had been back an hour.

Mrs. Mayfield was a grazier. Though she abandoned her arable land to her cousin's care, she divided with him her grass acres, and bred cattle, and churned butter, and made cheeses, and showed a working arm bare till dinner-time (one o'clock) six days in the week.

This little farm-house then held a healthy, happy party; but one was not quite content. Parents are matrimonial schemers; they cannot help it; it 's no use talking. Old Hathorn wanted Rose Mayfield to marry his son Robert, and so make all sure. The farmer was too wise to be always tormenting the pair to come together, but he secretly worked towards that end whenever he could without being seen through by them.

Their ages were much the same; and finer specimens of rustic stature and beauty in either sex were not to be seen for miles. But their dispositions were so different, that when, upon a kind word or a civility passing between them, old Hathorn used to look at Mrs. Hathorn, Mrs. Hathorn used to shake her head, as much as to say, "Maybe, but I doubt it."

One thing the farmer built on was this; that, though Mrs. Mayfield was a coquette, none of her beaux followed her to the farm. "She won't have them here," argued Hathorn, "and that shows she has a respect for Robert at bottom."

The good farmer's security was shaken by a little circumstance. Bix Farm, that lay but a mile from our ground, was to let, and, in course of time, was taken by a stranger from Berkshire. Coming into a farm is a business of several months; but the new tenant, a gay, dashing young fellow, came one day to look over his new farm; and, to Hathorn's surprise, called on him, and inquired for Mrs. Mayfield. At sight of the new-comer, that lady colored up to the eyes, and introduced him to her cousin as Mr. Hickman. The name, coupled with her manner, struck Hathorn, but he said nothing to Rose. He asked his wife who this Hickman was. "He is a stranger to me," was the reply, "ask Rose; I hear he was her beau out Abingdon way."

Here was a new feature. The good farmer became very uneasy; but country-folks have plenty of tact. He said little, — he only warned Robert (who did not seem dismayed by the intelligence), and held himself on his guard.

That same evening the whole family party were seated together, towards sundown, in Hathorn's dining-room, — the farmer smoking a clay pipe, Mrs. Hathorn sewing, Mrs. Mayfield going in and out, making business; but Robert was painfully reading some old deeds he had got from Mrs. Mayfield the week before. This had been the young man's occupation for several evenings, and Mrs. Mayfield had shrugged her shoulders at him and his deeds more than once.

On the present occasion, finding the room silent and reposeful, a state of things she abhorred, she said to Mrs. Hathorn, in a confidential whisper, so bell-like, that they all heard it, as she meant them, "Has your Robert any thoughts of turning lawyer at present?"

The question was put so demurely, that the old people smiled and did not answer, but looked towards Robert to answer. The said Robert smiled, and went on studying the parchment.

"He does n't make us much the wiser, though; does he?" continued Mrs. Mayfield. "Silence!" cried the tormentor, the next moment, "he is going to say something. He is only waiting till the sun goes down."

"He is only waiting till he has got something to say," replied Robert, in his quiet way.

"Ah!" was the reply; "that is a trick you have got. I say, Jane, if I was to wait for that, what would become of the house?"

"It would not be so gay as it is, I dare say, Rose."

"And that would be a pity, you know. Well, Bob, when do you look to have something to say? to-morrow night, — if the weather holds?"

"I think I shall have something to say as soon as I have read this through." He examined the last leaf, — then laid it down. "I have something to say."

Mrs. Hathorn laid down her work.

"Cousin Mayfield," said Robert, "what do you think of Uxmoor Farm?"

Cousin Mayfield, who had been all expectation, burst into a fit of laughter that rang through the room like a little peal of bells. Mrs. Hathorn looked vexed, and Robert colored for a moment; but he resumed coolly: "Why, it is two hundred acres, mostly good soil, and it marches with your up-hill land. Squire Phillips, that has just got it, counts it the cream of his estate."

"And what have I to do with Squire Phillips and Uxmoor?"

"Why, this, Rose. I think Uxmoor belongs to you."

"Nonsense, — is the boy mad? Why, Squire Phillips got it along with Hurley, and Norton, and all the Lydalls' farms. Of course they are all mine by right of blood, if every one had their own; but they were all willed away from us fifty years ago. Who does n't know that? No: Squire Phillips is rooted there too fast for us to take him up."

"It does not belong to Squire Phillips," was the cool reply.

"To whom, then?"

"To you, Rose; or, if not to you, to father yonder, — but, unless I am much mistaken, it belongs to you. I am no great discourser," continued Robert; "so I have written it down to the best of my ability, here. I wish you would look at this paper, and you might read it over to father and mother, if you will be so good. I am going my rounds"; and out strolled Mr. Robert, to see that every cow was foddered, and every pig had his share of the trough.

Mrs. Mayfield took Robert's paper, and read what he had written, — some score of little dry sentences, each of them a link in a chain of fact, — and this was the general result: Fifty years ago Mrs. Mayfield's father's father had broken off all connection with his son, and driven him out of his house and disinherited him, and adopted in his stead the father of Squire Phillips. The disinherited, being supplied with money by his mother, had got on in the world, and consoled himself for the loss of his father's farms by buying one or two of his own. He died before his father, and bequeathed all he possessed to his daughter Rose. At last the old fellow died at an immense age, and under his will Squire Philips took all his little estates: but here came in Robert's discovery. Of those four little estates, one had come into the old fellow's hands from his wife's father, and through his wife; and a strict settlement, drawn so long ago that all, except the old fellow who meant to cheat it, had forgotten it, secured the Uxmoor estate, after his parents' death, to Rose Mayfield's father, who by his will had unconsciously transferred it to Rose.

This, which looks clear, had been patiently disentangled from a mass of idle words by Robert Hathorn, and the family began to fall gradually into his opinion. The result was, Mrs. Mayfield went to law with Squire Phillips, and the old farmer's hopes revived; for he thought, and with reason, that all this must be another link between Robert and Rose; and so the months glided on. The fate of Uxmoor was soon to be tried at the Assizes. Mr. Hickman came

over now and then, preparatory to settling on Bix. Mrs. Mayfield made no secret that she found him "very good company," — that was her phrase, — and he courted her openly. Another month brought the great event of the agricultural year, "the harvest." This part of Oxfordshire can seldom get in its harvest without the assistance of some strange hands, and Robert agreed with three Irishmen and two Hampshire lads the afternoon before the wheat harvest. "With these and our own people we shall do well enough, father," said he.

Just before the sun set, Mrs. Hathorn was seated outside her own door with her work, when two people came through the farm-yard to speak to her; a young woman and a very old man. The former stood a little in the rear; and the old man came up to Mrs. Hathorn, and, taking off his hat, begged for employment in the fields.

"Our number is made up, old man," was the answer.

The old man's head drooped; but he found courage to say: "One more or one less won't matter much to you, and it is the bread of life to us."

"Poor old man," said Mrs. Hathorn, "you are too old for harvest work, I doubt."

"No such thing, dame," said the old man, testily.

"What is it, mother?" cried Robert from the barn.

"An old man and his daughter come for harvest work. They beg hard for it, Robert."

"Give them their supper, mother, and let them go."

"I will, Robert; no doubt the poor things are hungry and weary and all"; and she put down her work to go to the kitchen, but the old man stopped her.

"We are here for work, not for charity," said he; "and won't take anything we don't earn."

Mrs. Hathorn looked surprised, and a little affronted. The girl stepped nearer.

"No need to speak so sharp, grandfather," said she, in a clear, cold, but winning voice; "charity is not so common. We thank you, dame. He is an old soldier, and prouder than becomes the like of us. Good even, and good luck to your harvest!"

They turned to go.

"Stop, girl!" said Mrs. Hathorn. "Robert," cried she, "I wish you would come here."

Robert put on his coat, and came up.

"It is an old soldier, Robert; and they seem decent folk, the pair of them."

"An old soldier!" said Robert, looking with some interest at the old man, who, though stiff in the joints, was very erect.

"Ay! young man," said the other, boldly, "when I was your age I fought for the land; and now, you see, I must not work upon it!"

Robert looked at his mother.

"Come, Robert," said she, "we may all live to be old if it pleases God."

"Well," said Robert, "it seems hard to refuse an old soldier; but he is very old, and the young woman looks delicate; I am sure I don't know how to bargain with them."

"Count our two sickles as one, sir," said the girl, calmly.

"So be it," said Robert; "any way, we will give you a trial"; and he returned to his work. And Corporal Patrick, for that was the old soldier's name, no longer refused the homely supper that was offered him, since he could work it out in the morning.

The next morning at six o'clock the men and women were all in the wheat: Robert Hathorn at the head of them, for Robert was one of the best reapers in the country-side.

Many a sly jest passed at the expense of Patrick and his granddaughter Rachael. The old man often answered, but Rachael hardly ever. At the close of the day, they drew apart from all the rest, and seemed content when they were alone together.

In the course of a day or two, the reapers began to observe that Rachael was very handsome; and then she became the object of much coarse admiration. Rachael was as little affected by this as by their satire. She evaded it with a cold contempt, which left little more to be said; and then her rustic admirers took part with the women against her.

Rachael was pale; and perhaps this was one reason why her beauty did not strike the eye all at once; but, when you came to know her face, she was beautiful. Her long eyelashes were heavenly; her eye was full of soul; her features were refined, and her skin was white and transparent, and a slight blush came readily to it, at which moment she was lovely. It must be owned she did not appear to advantage in the field among the reapers; for there she seemed to feel at war; and her natural dignity degenerated into a certain doggedness. After a while Mrs. Hathorn took a fancy to her; and when she was beside this good, motherly creature, her asperity seemed to soften down, and her coldness turned to a not unamiable pensiveness.

Mrs. Hathorn said one evening to Robert: "Robert, look at that girl. Do try and find out what is the matter with her. She is a good girl as ever broke bread; but she breaks my heart to look at her; she is like a marble statue. It is not natural at her years to be so reserved."

"Oh!" answered Robert, "let her alone, there are talkers enough in the world. She is a modest girl, — the only one in the field, I should say, — and that is a great ornament to all women, if they would but see it."

"Well, Robert, at all events, have your eye on them; they are strangers, and the people about here are vulgar-behaved to strangers, you know."

"I 'll take care; and, as for Rachael, she knows how to answer the fools, — I noticed that the first day."

Sunday evening came; the villagers formed in groups about the alehouse, the stocks, and the other points of resort, and their occasional laughter fell discordantly upon the ear, so holy and tranquil seemed the air and the sky. Robert Hathorn strolled out at the back of the house to drink the Sabbath sunset after a week of toil: at the back of the largest barn was a shed, and from this shed, as he drew near to it, there issued sounds that seemed to him as sweetly in unison with that holy sunset as the villagers' rude mirth was out of tune. He came to the back of the shed, and it was Rachael reading the Bible aloud to her grandfather. The words were golden, and fell like dew upon all the spirits within their reach, — upon Robert, who listened to them unseen; upon Patrick, whose testy nature was calmed and soothed; and upon Rachael herself, who seemed at this moment more hopeful, and less determined to shrink within herself. Her voice, always sweet and winning, became richer and mellower as she read; and when she closed the book, she said, with a modest fervor one would hardly have suspected her of, "Blessed be God for this book, grandfather! I do think it is the best thing of all the good things he has given the world, and it is very encouraging to people of low condition like us."

"Ay," said the old man, "those were bold words you read just now, 'Blessed are the poor.'"

"Let us take them to heart, old man, since, strange as they sound, they must be true."

Corporal Patrick pondered awhile in silence, then said he was weary: "Let us bless the good people whose bread we have eaten this while, and I will go to sleep; Rachael, my child, if it was not for you, I could wish not to wake again."

Poor old man, he was aweary; he had seen better days, and fourscore years is a great age; and he had been a soldier, and fought in great battles head erect, and now, in his feeble days,

it was hard to have to bow the back and bend over the sickle among boys and girls who jeered him, and whose peaceful grandsires he had defended against England's enemies.

Corporal Patrick and his granddaughter went into the barn to sleep, as heretofore, on the straw. Robert Hathorn paced thoughtfully home, and about half an hour after this a cow-boy came into the barn to tell Corporal Patrick there were two truckle-beds at his service in a certain loft, which he undertook to show him. So the old soldier and Rachael bivouacked no longer in the barn.

"Who sent you?" said Rachael to the boy.

"Mistress."

After this Robert Hathorn paid considerable attention both to Patrick and Rachael, and she showed by degrees that she was not quite ice to a man that could respect her; not that her manner was inviting even to him, but at least it was courteous, and once or twice she even smiled on him, and a beautiful smile it was when it did come; and, whether from its beauty or its rarity, made a great impression on all who saw it.

It was a fine harvest-time, upon the whole, and with some interruptions the work went merrily on; the two strangers, in spite of hard labor, improved in appearance. Mrs. Hathorn set this down to the plentiful and nourishing meals which issued twice a day from her kitchen; and, as they had always been her favorites, she drew Robert's attention to the bloom that began to spread over Rachael's cheek, and the old soldier's brightening eye, as her work in a great measure.

Mrs. Mayfield was away, and during her absence Hickman had not come once to visit his farm or Hathorn's. This looked ugly.

"Wife," said the farmer, one day, "what makes our Robert so moody of late?"

"O, you have noticed it, have you? Then I am right; the boy has something on his mind."

"That is easy to be seen, and I think I know what it is."

"Do you, John? what?"

"Why, he sees this Hickman is in a fair way to carry off Rose Mayfield."

"It is not that."

"Why, what else can it be?"

"It is a wonder to me," said Mrs. Hathorn, "that a man should n't know his own son better than you seem to know Robert. They are very good friends; but what makes you think Robert would marry her? Have you forgotten how strict he is about women? Why did he part with Lucy Blackwood, the only sweetheart he ever had?"

"Hanged if I remember."

"Because she got herself spoken of flirting at Oxford races once in a way; and Rose does mostly nothing else. And they do say that once or twice since her husband died, ahem! —"

"She has kicked over the traces altogether? Fiddlestick!"

"Fiddlestick be it! She is a fine, spirity woman, and such are apt to set folk talking more than they can prove. Well, Robert would n't marry a woman that made folk talk about her."

"O, he is not such a fool as to fling the farm to a stranger. When does Rose come home?"

"Next week, as soon as the Assizes are over, and the Uxmoor cause settled one way or other."

"Well, when she comes back, you will see him clear up directly, and then I shall know what to do. They must come together, and they shall come together; and, if there is no other way, I know one that will bring them together, and I'll work that way if I'm hanged for it."

"With all my heart," said Mrs. Hathorn, calmly. "You can but try."

"I *will* try all I know."

Will it be believed, that, while he was in this state of uneasiness about his favorite project, Mr. Casenower came and invited him to a friendly conference; announced to him that

he admired Mrs. Mayfield beyond measure, and had some reason to think she was not averse to him, and requested the farmer's co-operation?

"Confound the jade," thought Hathorn, "she has been spreading the net for this one, too, then; she will break my heart before I have done with her."

He answered demurely, "that he did not understand women; that his mind was just now in the harvest; and he hoped Mr. C. would excuse him, and try his luck himself, — along with the rest," said the old boy, rather bitterly.

The harvest drew towards its close; the barns began to burst with the golden crops, and one fair rick after another rose behind them, like a rear-guard, until one fine burning-hot day in September there remained nothing but a small barley-field to carry.

In the house Mrs. Hathorn and the servants were busy preparing the harvest-home dinner; in the farm-yard, Casenower and old Hathorn were arguing a point of husbandry; the warm haze of a September day was over the fields; the little pigs toddled about contentedly in the straw of the farm-yard, rooting here, and grunting there; the pigeons sat upon the barn tiles in flocks, and every now and then one would come shooting down, and settle, with flapping wings, upon a bit of straw six inches higher than the level; and every now and then was heard the thunder of the horses' feet as they came over the oak floor of a barn, drawing a loaded wagon into it. Suddenly a halloo was heard down the road; Mr. Casenower and Hathorn looked over the wall, and it was Mrs. Mayfield's boy Tom, riding home full pelt, and hurrahing as he came along.

"We have won the day, farmer," shouted he; "you may dine at Uxmoor if you like. La bless you, the judge would n't hear a word against us. Hurrah! here comes the mistress; hurrah!" And, sure enough, Mrs. Mayfield was seen in her hat and habit, riding her bay mare up at a hand-gallop on the grass by the roadside. Up she came; the two men waved their hats to her, which salute she returned on the spot, in the middle of a great shy, which her mare made as a matter of course; but, before they could speak, she stopped their mouths. "Where is Robert? Not a word till he is by. I have not forgot to whom I owe it." She sprang from the saddle, and gave a hand to each of the men; but before they could welcome her, or congratulate her, she had the word again. "Why of course you are; you are going to tell me you have been as dull as ditch-water since I went, as if I did n't know that; and as for Uxmoor, we will all go there together in the afternoon, and I'll kiss your Robert then and there; and then he will faint away, and we'll come home in the cool of the evening. Is barley cart done yet?"

"No, you are just in time; they are in the last field."

"Well, I must run in and cuddle Jane, and help them on with the dinner a bit."

"Ay, do, Rose; put a little life into them."

In about ten minutes Mrs. Mayfield joined them again; and old Hathorn, who had spent that period in a brown study, began operations upon her, like a cautious general as he was.

His first step might be compared to reconnoitring the ground; and here, if any reader of mine imagines that country people are simple and devoid of art, for Heaven's sake let him resign that notion, which is entirely founded on pastorals written in metropolitan garrets.

Country people look simple; but that is a part of their profound art. They are the square-nosed sharks of *terra firma*. Their craft is smooth, plausible, and unfathomable. You don't believe me, perhaps. Well, then, my sharp cockney, go, live, and do business in the country, and tell me at the year's end whether you

have not fonnd humble unknown Practitioners of Humbug, Flattery, Overreaching, and Manœuvre, to whom thieves in London might go to school.

We hear much, from such as write with the but-end of their grandfather's flageolet, about simple swains and downy meads; but, when you get there, you find the natives are at least as downy as any part of the concern.

"I thought you would be home to-day, Rose."

"Did you? Why?"

"Because Richard Hickman has been here twice this morning."

"Richard Hickman! what was his business here?"

"Well, they do say you and he are to go to church together one of these days, — the pair of you."

"Well, if the pair of us go to church, there will be a pair of weddings that day."

"How smooth a lie do come off a woman's tongue, to be sure!" thought Mr. Hathorn.

Mr. Casenower put in his word. "I trust I shall not offend you by my zeal, madam, but I hope to see you married to a better man than Hickman."

"With all my heart, Mr. Cas—hem! You find me a better man, and I won't make two bites at him, —ha! ha! ha!"

"He bears an indifferent character, —ask the farmer here."

"O," said the farmer, with an ostentation of candor, "I don't believe all I hear."

"I don't believe half, nor a quarter," said Mrs. Mayfield; "but, for Heaven's sake, don't fancy I am wrapped up in Richard Hickman, or in any other man; but he is as good company as here and there one, and he has a tidy farm nigh hand, and good land of his own out Newbury way by all acconnts."

"Good land," shouted the farmer; "did you ever see it?"

"Not I."

"Rose," said Hathorn, solemnly (he had never seen it either), "it is as poor as death! covered with those long docks, I hear, and that is a sure sign of land with no heart in it, just as a thistle is a good sign. Do your books tell you that?" said he, suddenly turning to Casenower.

"No," said that gentleman, with incredulous contempt.

"And it is badly farmed; no wonder, when the farmer never goes nigh it himself, trusts all to a sort of bailiff. Mind your eye, Rose. Why does he never go there? tell me that."

"Well, you know, of course; he tells me he left it out of regard for me."

"Haw! haw! haw! why, he has known you but six months, and he has not lived at home this five years. What do you think of it, Mr. Casenower? Mind your eye, Rose."

"I mean to," said Rose; and if you had seen the world of suppressed fun and peeping observation in the said eye, you would have felt how capable it was of minding itself, and of piercing like a gimlet even through a rustic Machiavel.

Mr. Casenower whispered to Hathorn, "Put in a word for me." He then marched up to Rose, and, taking her hand, said, with a sepulchral tenderness, at which Rose's eye literally danced in her head: "Know your own value, dear Mrs. Mayfield, and do not throw yourself away on an unworthy object." He then gave Hathorn a slight wink and disappeared, leaving his cause in that simple rustic's hands.

"It is all very fine, but if I am to wait for a man without a fault, I shall die an old — fool."

"That is not to be thought of," said Hathorn, smoothly; "but what you want is a fine, steady young man, — like my Robert, now — "

"So you have told me once or twice of late," said the lady, archly. "Robert is a good lad, and pleases my eye well enough, for that matter; but he has a fault that would n't suit me,

nor any woman, I should think, without she was a fool."

"Why, what is wrong about the boy?"

"The boy looks sharper after women than women will bear. He reads everything we do with magnifying-glasses, and I like fun, always did, and always shall; and then he would be jealous, — and then I should leave him the house to himself, that is all."

"No, no! you would break him into common sense."

"More likely he would make a slave of me; and, if I am to be one, let me gild the chain a bit, as the saying is."

"Now, Rose," said the tactician, "you know very well a woman can turn a man round her finger if he loves her."

"Of course I know that; but Robert does not happen to love me."

"Does n't love you! Ay, but he does!"

"What makes you think that?"

"O, if you are blind, I am not. He tries to hide it, because you are rich, and he is poor and proud."

"O fie! don't talk nonsense. What signifies who has the money?"

"The way I first found it out is, when they speak of your marrying that Hickman, he trembles all over like. Here comes his mother; you ask her," added the audacious schemer.

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Mayfield; "none of your nonsense before her, if you please"; and she ran off, with a heightened color.

"I shall win the day," cried Hathorn to his wife. "I have made her believe Robert loves her, and now I 'll tell him she dotes on him. Why, what is the matter with you? You seem put out. What ails you?"

"I have just seen Robert, and I don't like his looks. He is like a man in a dream this morning, — worse than ever."

"Why, what can be the matter with him?"

"If I was to tell you my thought, it would n't please you, — and, after all, I may be wrong. Hush! here he is. Take no notice, for Heaven's sake."

At this moment the object of his father's schemes and his mother's anxiety sauntered up to them, with his coat tied round his neck by the arms, and a pitchfork over his shoulder. "Father," said he, "you may tap the barrel; the last wagon is coming up the lane."

"Ay," was the answer; "and you go and offer your arm to Rose, — she is come home, — and ask her to dance with you."

"I am not in the humor to gallivant," was the languid answer. "I leave that to you, father."

"To me, — at my time of life! Is that the way to talk at eight-and-twenty? And Rose Mayfield, — the rose-tree in full blossom!"

"Yes; but too many have been smelling at the blossom for me ever to plant the tree in my garden."

"What does the boy mean?"

"To save time and words, father; because you have been at me about her once or twice of late."

"What! is it because she likes dancing and diversion at odd times? Is that got to be a crime, Parson Bob?"

"No! but I won't have a wife I could n't trust at those pastimes," was the resolute answer.

"O, if you are one of the jealous-minded ones, don't you marry any one, my poor chap!"

"Father, there are the strange reapers to pay. Shall I settle with them for you?" said Robert, quietly.

"No! Let them come here; I 'll pay them," answered Hathorn, senior, rather sullenly.

If you want to be crossed, and thwarted, and vexed, set your heart, not on a thing you can do yourself, but on something somebody else is to do: if you want to be tormented to death, let the wish of your heart depend upon two people, a man and a

woman, neither of them yourself. Now do try this recipe; you will find it an excellent one.

Old Hathorn, seated outside his own door, with a table and money-bags before him, paid the Irishmen and the Hampshire lads, and invited each man to the harvest-home dinner. He was about to rise and put up his money-bags, when Mrs Hathorn cried to him from the house, "Here are two more that have not been paid"; and the next minute old Patrick and Rachael issued from the house, and came in front of the table. Robert, who was going in to dress, turned round and leaned against the corner of the house, with his eyes upon the ground. "Let me see," said Hathorn, "what are you to have?"

"Count yourself," replied Patrick; "you know what you give the others."

"What I give the others! but you can't have done the work — "

"Not of two; no, we don't ask the wages of two."

"Of course you don't."

A spasm of pain crossed Robert's face at this discussion, but he remained with his eyes upon the ground.

"Where 's the dispute," said the old soldier, angrily; "here are two that ask the wages of one; is that hard upon you?"

"There is no dispute, old man," said Robert, steadily. "Father, twenty-five times five shilling is six pounds five; that is what you owe them."

"Six pound five for a man of that age?"

"And my daughter; is she to go for nothing?"

"Your daughter, your daughter; she is not strong enough to do much, I 'm sure."

Rachael colored: her clear, convincing voice fell upon the disputants. "We agreed with Master Robert to keep a ridge between us, and we have done it as well as the best reaper. Pay us as one good reaper then."

"That 's fair! that is fair! If you agreed with my son, a bargain is a bargain; but, for all that, one good arm is better than two weak ones, and — "

This tirade received an unexpected interruption. Robert walked up to the table, without lifting his eyes from the ground, and said: "I ask your pardon, father; your bad leg has kept you at home this harvest; but I reaped at the head of the band, and I assure you the young woman did a man's share; and every now and then the old man took her place; and so, resting by turns, they kept ahead of the best sickle there. And therefore I say," continued Robert, raising his eyes timidly, "on account of their poverty, their weary limbs, and their stout heart for work, you cannot pay them less than one good reaper."

"What is it, Robert?" said Mrs. Hathorn, who had come out to see the meaning of all this.

"But if he would be juster still, mother, like him that measures his succor to the need, he would pay them as one and a half. I 've said it."

Hathorn stared with ludicrous wonder. "And why not as two? Are you mad, Robert? taking their part against me?"

"Enough said," answered Patrick, with spirit. "Thank you, Master Robert, but that would be an alms, and we take but our due. Pay our two sickles as one, and let us go."

"You see, father," cried Robert, "these are decent people; and, if you had seen how they wrought, your heart would melt as mine does. O mother! it makes me ill to think there are poor Christians in the world so badly off they must bow to work beyond their age and strength to bear. Take a thought, father. A man that might be *your* father, — a man of fourscore years, — and a delicate woman, — to reap, the hardest of all country work, from dawn till sundown, under this scorching sun and wind, that has dried my throat and burnt my eyes, — let alone theirs. It

is hard, father; and, if you have a feeling heart, you can't show it better than here."

"There! there!" cried the farmer, "say no more; it is all right. (You have made the girl cry, Bob.) Robert does n't often speak, dame, so we are bound to listen when he does. There is the money. I never heard that chap say so many words before."

"We thank you all," said Patrick; "my blessing be on your grain, good folks; and that won't hurt you from a man of fourscore."

"That it will not, Daddy Patrick," said Mrs. Hathorn. "You will stay for harvest-home, both of you? Rachael, if you have a mind to help me, wash some of the dishes."

"Ay!" cried the farmer: "and it is time you were dressed, Bob." And so the party separated.

A few minutes later Rachael came to the well, and began to draw a bucket of water. This well worked in the following manner. A chain and rope were passed over a cylinder, and two buckets were attached to the several ends of the rope, so that the empty bucket descending helped in some slight degree the full bucket to mount. This cylinder was turned by an iron handle. The well was a hundred feet deep. Rachael drew the bucket up easily enough until the last thirty feet; and then she found it hard work. She had both hands on the iron handle, and was panting a little, like a tender fawn, when a deep but gentle voice said in her ear: "Let go, Rachael"; and the handle was taken out of her hand by Robert Hathorn.

"Never mind me, Master Robert," said Rachael, giving way reluctantly.

"Always at some hard work or other," said he; "you will not be easy till you kill yourself." And with this he whirled the handle round like lightning with one hand, and the bucket came up in a few moments. He then filled the pitcher for her, which she took up, and was about to go into the house with it. "Stay one minute, Rachael."

"Yes, Master Robert."

"How old are you, Rachael?" Robert blushed after he had put this question; but he was obliged to say something, and he did not well know how to begin.

"Twenty-two," was Rachael's answer.

"Don't go just yet. Is this your first year's reaping?"

"No, the third."

"You must be very poor, I am afraid."

"Very poor indeed, Master Robert."

"Do you live far from here?"

"Don't you remember I told you I came twenty miles from here?"

"Why, Newbury is about that distance."

"I think your mother will want me."

"Well, don't let me keep you against your will."

Rachael entered the Hathorns' side.

Robert's heart sank. She was so gentle, yet so cold and sad. There was no winning her confidence, it appeared. Presently she returned with an empty basket, to fetch the linen from Mrs. Mayfield's side. As she passed Robert, who, in despair, had determined not to try any more, but who looked up sorrowfully in her face, she gave him a smile, a very faint one, but still it did express some slight recognition and thanks. His resolve melted at this one little ray of kindly feeling.

"Rachael," said he, "have you any relations your way?"

"Not now!" and Rachael was a beautiful statue again.

"But you have neighbors who are good to you?"

"We ask nothing of them."

"Would it not be better if you could both live near us?"

"I think not."

"Why? my mother has a good heart."

"Indeed she has."

"And Mrs. Mayfield is not a bad one either."

"I hear her well spoken of."

"And yet you mean to live on, so far away from all of us?"

"Yes! I must go for the linen." She waited a moment as it were for permission to leave him, and, nothing more being said, she entered Mrs. Mayfield's side.

Robert leaned his head sorrowfully on the rails, and fell into a revery.

"I am nothing to her," thought he; "her heart is far away. How good, and patient, and modest she is, but O, how cold! She turns my heart to stone. I am a fool; she has some one in her own country to whom she is as warm, perhaps, as she is cold to us strangers, — is that a fault? She is too beautiful, and too good, not to be esteemed by others besides me. Ah! her path is one way, mine another, — worse luck, — would to God she had never come here! Well, may she be happy! She can't hinder me from praying she may be happy, happier than she is now. Poor Rachael!"

A merry but somewhat vulgar voice broke incredibly harsh and loud, as it seemed, upon young Hathorn's revery.

"Good day, Master Robert."

Robert looked up, and there stood a young farmer in shooting-jacket and gaiters, with a riding-whip in his hand.

"Good morning, Mr. Hickman."

"The mistress is come home, I hear, and it is your harvest-home today, so I 'll stop here, for I am tired, and so is my horse, for that matter." Mr. Hickman wasted the latter part of this discourse on vacancy, for young Hathorn went coolly away without taking any further notice of him.

"I call that the cold shoulder," thought Hickman; "but it is no wonder; that chap wants to marry her himself, of course he does. Not if I know it, Bob Hathorn."

It was natural that Hickman, whose great object just now was Rose Mayfield, should put this reading on Robert's coldness: but in point of fact it was not so; the young man had no feeling towards Hickman but the quiet repugnance of a deep to a shallow soul, of a quiet and thoughtful to a rattling fellow. Only just now gayety was not in his heart, and as Hickman was generally gay, and always sonorous, he escaped to his own thoughts. Hickman watched his retreat, with an eye that said, "You are my rival, but not one I fear; I can outwit you." And it was with a smile of triumphant conscious superiority that Richard Hickman turned round to go into Mrs. Mayfield's house, and found himself face to face with Rachael, who was just coming out of it with the basket full of linen in her hand. Words cannot paint the faces of this woman and this man, when they saw one another. They both started, and were red and white by turns, and their eyes glared upon one another; yet, though the surprise was equal, the emotion was not quite the same. The woman stood, her bosom heaving slowly and high, her eye dilating, her lips apart, her elastic figure rising higher and higher. She stood there, wild as a startled panther, uncertain whether to fight or to fly. The man, after the first start, seemed to cower under her eye, and half a dozen expressions that chased one another across his face left one fixed there, — Fear! abject fear!

CHAPTER II.

They eyed one another in silence: at last Hickman looked down upon the ground and said, in faltering, ill-assured tones, "H—how d' ye do, Rachael? I — I did n't expect to see you here."

"Nor I you."

"If you are busy, don't let me stop you, you know," said Hickman, awk-

wardly and confused, and, like one with no great resources, compelled to utter something.

Then Rachael, white as a sheet, took up her basket again, and moved away in silence! The young farmer eyed her apprehensively, and, being clearly under the influence of some misgiving as to her intentions, said: "If you blow me, it will do me harm and you no good, you know, Rachael. Can't we be friends?"

"Friends! — you and I?"

"Don't be in such a hurry, — let us talk it over. I am a little better off than I used to be in those days."

"What is that to me?"

"Plenty; if you won't be spiteful, and set others against me in this part": by "others," doubtless Hickman intended Mrs. Mayfield.

"I shall neither speak nor think of you," was the cold answer.

Had Richard Hickman been capable of fathoming Rachael Wright, or even of reading her present marble look and tone aright, he would have seen that he had little to apprehend from her beyond contempt, a thing he would not in the least have minded; but he was cunning, and, like the cunning, shallowish; so he pursued his purpose, feeling his way with her to the best of his ability.

"I have had a smart bit of money left me lately, Rachael."

"What is that to me?"

"What is it? why, a good deal, because I could assist you *now*, maybe."

"And what right have you to assist me *now?*"

"Confound it, Rachael, how proud you are! — why, you are not the same girl. O, I see! as for assisting you, I know you would rather work than be in debt to any one; but then there is another besides you, you know."

"What other?" said Rachael, losing her impassibility, and trembling all over at this simple word.

"What other?" why, confound it, who ever saw a girl fence like this? I suppose you think I am not man enough to do what's right; I am, though, now I have got the means."

"To do what?"

"Why, to do my duty by him, — to provide for him."

"For whom?" cried Rachael, wildly, "WHEN HE IS DEAD!"

"Dead?"

"Dead!"

"Don't say so, Rachael; don't say so."

"He is dead!"

"Dead! I never thought I should have cared much; but that word do seem to knock against my heart. I'd give a hundred pounds to any one would tell me it is not true, — poor thing! I've been to blame; I've been to blame."

"You were not near us when he came into the world; you were not near us when he went out of it. He lived in poverty, with me; he died in poverty, for all I could do, and it is against my will if I did not die with him. Our life or our death gave you no cares. While he lived, you received a letter every six months from me, claiming my rights as your wife."

Hickman nodded assent.

"Last year you had no letter."

"No more there was."

"And did not that tell you? Poor Rachael had lost her consolation and her hope, and had no more need of anything!"

"Poor Rachael!" cried the man, stung with sudden remorse. "Curse it all! Curse you, Dick Hickman!" Then, suddenly recovering his true nature, and, like us men, never at a loss for an excuse against a woman, he said, angrily: "What is the use of letters? — why did n't you come and tell me you were so badly off?"

"Me come after you! The wrongdoer?"

"O, confound your pride! Should have sent the o'd man to me, then."

"My grandfather, an old soldier as proud as fire! Sent him to the man who robbed me of my good name by cheating the law! You are a fool! Three times he left our house with

his musket loaded to kill you, — three times I got him home again; but how? — by prayers, and tears, and force, all three, or you would not be here in life."

"The Devil! what an old Tartar! I say, is he here alone with you?"

"O, you need not fear," said Rachael, with a faint expression of scorn, "he is going directly, and I am going too; and when I do go from here, I shall have lost all the little pleasure and hope I have in the world," said Rachael, sorrowfully; and, as she said this, she became unconscious of Hickman's presence, and moved away without looking at him; but that prudent person dared not part with her so. He was one of those men who say, "I know the women," and, in his sagacity, he dreaded this woman's tongue. He determined, therefore, to stop her tongue, and not to risk Rose Mayfield and thousands for a few pounds.

"Now, Rachael, listen to me. Since the poor child is dead, there is only you to think of. We can do one another good or harm, you and I; better good than harm, I say. Suppose I offered you twenty pounds, now, to keep dark?"

"You poor creature!"

"Well, thirty, then?"

"O, hold your tongue, — you make me ashamed of myself as well as you."

"I see what it is, you want too much; you want me to be your husband."

"No; while my child lived, I claimed my right for his sake: but not now, not now"; and the poor girl suddenly turned her eyes on Hickman, with an indescribable shudder, that a woman would have interpreted to the letter; but no man could be expected to read it quite aright, so many things it said.

Hickman the sagacious chose to understand by it pique and personal hostility to him, and desire of vengeance; and, having failed to bribe her, he now resolved to try and outface her.

It so happened that at this very moment merry voices began to sound on every side. The clatter was heard of tables being brought out of the kitchen, and the harvest-home people were seen coming towards the place where Rachael and Hickman were; so Hickman said, hastily, "Any way, don't think to blow me, — for, if you do, I'll swear you out, my lass, I'll swear you out."

"No doubt you know how to lie," was the cold reply.

"There, Rachael," cried Hickman, piteously, lowering his tone of defiance in a moment, "don't expose me before the folk, whatever you do. Here they all come, confound them!"

Rachael made no answer. She retired into the Hathorns' house, and in a few minutes the tables were set, just outside the house, and loaded with good cheer, and the rustics began to ply knife and fork as zealously as they had sickle, and rake, and pitchfork; and so, on the very spot of earth where Rachael had told Hickman her child was dead, and with him her heart, scarce five minutes afterwards came the rattle of knives and forks, and peals of boisterous laughter and huge feeding. And thus it happens to many a small locality in this world, — tragedy, comedy, and farce are acted on it by turns, and all of them in earnest. So harvest-home dinner proceeded with great zeal; and after the solids the best ale was served round *ad libitum*, and intoxication, sanctified by immemorial usage, followed in due course. However, as this symptom of harvest was a long time coming on upon the present occasion, owing to peculiar interruptions, the reader will not have to follow us so far, which let us hope he will not regret.

Few words worthy of being embalmed in an immortal story, warranted to live a month, were uttered during the discussion of the meats, for when the *fruges consumere nati* are let loose upon beef, bacon, and pudding, among the results dialogue on a large scale is not.

"Yet shall the Muse" embalm a conversation that passed on this occasion between the brothers Messenger, laborers aged about fifty, who had been on this farm nearly all their lives.

Bob Messenger was carving a loin of veal. Jem Messenger sat opposite him, eating bacon and beans on a very large scale.

Bob (aiming at extraordinary politeness). "Wool you have some veal along with your bacon, Jem?"

Jem. "That I wool not, Bob" (with a reproachful air, as one whom a brother had sought to entrap).

When the table was cleared of the viands, the ale-mugs and horns were filled, and Mrs. Mayfield and the Hathorns took part in the festive ceremony, that is, they did not sit at the table, but they showed themselves from time to time, and made their humble guests heartily welcome by word, and look, and smile, as their forefathers had done at harvest-time, each in their century and generation.

Presently Bob Messenger arose solemnly, with his horn of ale in his hand. The others rose after him, knowing well what he was going to do, and chanted with him the ancient harvest-home stave: —

"Here's a health unto our master,
The founder of the feast,
Not only to our master,
But to our mistress.
Two voices. Then drink, boys, drink,
And see as you do not spill,
For if you do, you shall drink to
Our health with a free good-will.
Chorus. Then drink, boys, drink," &c.

Corporal Patrick and Rachael left the table. They had waited only to take part in this compliment to their entertainers, and now they left. The reason was, one or two had jeered them before grace.

The corporal had shaved and made himself very clean, and he had put on his faded red jacket, which he always carried about, and Rachael had washed his neck-handkerchief, and tied it neatly about his neck, and had put on herself a linen collar and linen wristbands, very small and plain, but white and starched; and at this their humble attempt to be decent and nice one or two (who happened to be dirty at the time) could not help sneering. Another thing, Rachael and Patrick were strangers. Some natives cut a jest or two at their expense, and Patrick was about to answer by flinging his mug at one man's head; but Rachael restrained him, and said: "Be patient, grandfather. They were never taught any better. When the farmer's health has been drunk we can leave them."

People should be able to take jests, or to answer them in kind, not to take them to heart; but Rachael and Patrick had seen better days (they were not so very proud and irritable then), and now Patrick, naturally high-spirited, was sore, and could not bear to be filliped, and Rachael was become too cold and bitter towards all the vulgar natures that blundered up against her, not meaning her any good, nor much harm, either, poor devils!

A giggle greeted their departure; but it must be owned it was a somewhat uneasy giggle.

There was in the company a certain Timothy Brown John, who was naturally a shoemaker, but was turned out into the stubble annually at harvest-time. The lad had a small rustic genius for music, which he illustrated by playing the clarionet in church, to the great regret of the clergyman. Now after the chorus one or two were observed to be nudging this young man, and he to be making those mock-modest difficulties which are part of a singer, in town or country.

"Ay, Tim," cried Mrs. Mayfield, "you sing us a song."

"He have got a new one, mistress!" put in a carter's lad, with saucer eyes.

"What is it about, boy?"

"Well," replied the youngster, "it is about love" (at which the girls

giggled); "and I think it is about you, Dame Mayfield."

"About me! then it must be nice."

Chorus of Rustics. "Haw! haw! haw!"

"Come, Mr. Brown John, I will trouble you for it, directly. I can see the bottom of some of their mugs, Jane."

"Well," said Mr. Brown John, looking down, "I don't know what to say about it. Mayhap you might n't like it quite so well before so much company."

"Why not, pray?"

"Well, you see, dame, I am afeard I shall give you a red face, like, with this here song."

"If you do, I 'll give you one with this here hand."

Chorus. "Haw, haw! Ho!"

"Drat the boy, sing, and have done with it."

"I 'll do my best, ma'am," replied Tim, gravely.

On this, Mr. Brown John drew from his pocket a diminutive flute, with one key, and sounded his G at great length. He then paused, to let his G enter his own mind and those around; he then composed his features like a preacher, and was about to enter on his undertaking, when the whole operation was suddenly, and remorselessly, and provokingly interrupted by Mr. Casenower, who, struck as it appeared with a sudden, irresistible idea, burst upon them all with this question: —

"Do any of you know one Rebecca Reid, in this part of the world?"

The company stared.

Some, to whom this question had been put by him before, giggled; others scratched their heads; others got no further than a stricken look. A few mustered together their wits, and assured Mr. Casenower they had never heard tell of "the wench."

"How devilish odd!" cried Casenower, "it is not such a common combination of sounds, one would think."

"I know Hannah Reid," squeaked a small cow-boy; he added with enthusiasm, "she is a capital slider, she is!!!" and he smiled at some reminiscence, perchance of a joint somersault upon the ice, last winter.

"Hannah does not happen to be Rebecca, young gentleman," objected Casenower; "sing away, John Brown."

"I 'm a going, sir. G—g—g—g—" and he impressed the key-note once more upon their souls. Then sang Brown John the following song, and the rest made the laughing chorus, and, as they all laughed in different ways, though they began laughing from their heads, ended in laughing from their hearts. It was pleasant and rather funny, and proved so successful, that after this *Il Maestro* Brown John and his song were asked to all the feasts in a circle of seven miles. There were eight verses: we will confine ourselves to two, because paper is not absolutely valueless, whatever the trivoluminous may think.

"When Richard appeared, how my heart pit-a-pat
With a tenderly motion, with which it was seized!
To hear the young fellow's gay, innocent chat
I could listen forever, O dear! I 'm so pleased!
I 'm so pleased! ha! ha! ha! ha!
I 'm so pleased! ha! ha! ha! ha!
I'm a going to be married, — O dear! I 'm so pleased!
I 'm a going to be married, — O dear! I 'm so pleased!
Chorus. I 'm so pleased, &c.

"O sweet is the smell of the new-mown hay,
And sweet are the cowslips that spring in May;
But sweeter 's my lad than the daisied lawn,
Or the hay, or the flower, or the cows at the dawn.
I 'm so pleased," &c.

We writers can tell "the what," but not so very often "the how," of anything. I can give Tim's bare words, but it is not in my power nor any man's to write down the manner of *Il Maestro* in singing. How he dwelt on the short syllables, and abridged

the long, — his grave face till he came to his laugh, — and then the enormous mouth that flew suddenly open, and the jovial peal that came ringing through two rows of teeth like white chess pawns, — and with all this his quaint, indescribable, *dulcet*, rustic twang, that made his insignificant melody ring like church bells heard from the middle of a wood, and taste like metheglin come down to us in a yew-tree cask from the Druids!

During the song, one Robert Munday and his son, rural fiddlers, who by instinct nosed festivities, appeared at the gate, each with a green bag. A shriek of welcome greeted them; they were set in a corner, with beef and ale galore, and soon the great table was carried in, the ground cleared, the couples made, and the fiddles tuning.

The Messrs Munday made some preliminary flourishes, like hawks hovering uncertain where to pounce, and then, like the same bird, they suddenly dashed into "The day in June."

Their style was rough, and bore a family likeness to ploughing, but it was true, clean, and spirited; the notes of the *arpeggio* danced out like starry sparks in fireworks.

Moreover, the Messrs. Munday played to the foot, which is precisely what your melted-butter-violinist always fails to do, whether he happens to be washing out the soul of a waltz, or of a polka, or of a reel.

They also played so as to raise the spirits of all who heard them, young or old, which is an artistic effect of the very highest order, however attained, and never is and never will be attained by the melted-butter-violinist.

The fiddlers being merry, the dancers were merry; the dancers being merry, the fiddlers said to themselves, "Aha! we have not missed fire," and so grew merrier still. And thus the electric fire of laughter and music darted to and fro. Dance, sons and daughters of toil! None had ever a better right to dance than you have this sunny afternoon in clear September. It was you that painfully ploughed the stiff soil; it was you that trudged up the high, incommoding furrow, and painfully cast abroad the equal seed. You that are women bowed the back, and painfully drilled holes in the soil, and poured in the seed; and this month past you have all bent, and, with sweating brows, cut down and housed the crops that came from the seed you planted. Dance! for those yellow ricks, trophies of your labor, say you have a right to; those barns, bursting with golden fruit, swear you have a right to. Harvest-tide comes but once a year. Dance! sons and daughters of toil.

Exult over your work, smile with the smiling year, and, in this bright hour, O cease, my poor soul, to envy the rich and great! Believe me, they are never, at any hour of their lives, so cheery as you are now. How can they be? With them dancing is tame work, an every-day business, — no rarity, no treat. Don't envy them, — God is just, and deals the sources of content with a more equal hand than appears on the surface of things. Dance, too, without fear; let no Puritan make you believe it is wrong; things are wrong out of season, and right in season; to dance in harvest is as becoming as to be grave in church. The Almighty has put it into the hearts of insects to dance in the afternoon sun, and of men and women in every age and every land to dance round the gathered crop, whether it be corn, or oil, or wine, or any other familiar miracle that springs up sixty-fold and nurtures and multiplies the life of man. More fire, fiddlers! play to the foot, — play to the heart the sprightly "Day in June." Ay, foot it freely, lads and lasses; my own heart is warmer to think you are merry once or twice in your year of labor. Dance, my poor brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of toil!

After several dances, Mrs. Mayfield, who had been uneasy in her mind at remaining out of the fun, could bear inaction no longer; so she pounced on Robert Hathorn and drew him into the magic square. Robert danced, but in a very listless way; so much so, that his mother, who stood by, took occasion to give him a push and say: "Is that the way to dance?" at which poor Robert tried to do better, but his limbs, as well as his face, showed how far his heart was from his heels.

Now, in the middle of this dance, suddenly loud and angry sounds were heard approaching, and the voice of old Patrick was soon distinguished, and the next moment he was seen following Mr. Hickman, and hanging on his rear, loading him with invective. Rachael was by his side, endeavoring, in vain, to soothe him, and to end what to her was a most terrible scene. At a gesture from Mrs. Mayfield, the fiddlers left off, and the rustics turned, all curiosity, towards the interruption. "There are bad hearts in the world," shouted Patrick to all present, — "vermin that steal into honest houses and file * them, — bad hearts, that rob the poor of that which is before life; O yes, far before life!" and, as he uttered these words, Patrick was observed to stagger.

"The old man is drunk," said Hickman. "I don't know what he means."

Rachael colored high and cried: "No, Master Robert, I assure you he is not drunk, but he is not himself; he has been complaining this hour past; see! look at his eye. Good people, my grandfather is ill"; and, indeed, as she said these words, Patrick, who, from the moment he had staggered, had stared wildly and confusedly around him, suddenly bowed his head and dropped upon his knees; he would have fallen on his face, but Rachael's arm now held him up.

* For defile.

In a moment several persons came round them; amongst the rest, Robert and Mrs. Mayfield. Robert loosened his neckcloth, and, looking at the old man's face and eye, he said, gravely and tenderly: "Rachael, I have seen the like of this before — in harvest."

"O Master Robert, what is it?"

"Rachael, it is a stroke of the sun!" He turned to his mother: "God forgive us all, the old man was never fit for the work we have put him to."

"Come, don't stand gaping there," cried Mrs. Mayfield; "mount my mare and gallop for the doctor, — don't spare her, — off with you! Betsy, get a bed ready in my garret."

"Eh, dear!" said Mrs. Hathorn, "I doubt the poor thing's troubles are over"; and she put up her apron and began to cry.

"O no!" cried Rachael. "Grandfather, — don't leave me! — don't leave me!"

Corporal Patrick's lips moved.

"I can't see ye! I can't see any of ye!" he said, half-fretfully. "Ah!" he resumed, as if a light had broken in on him. "Yes!" said he, very calmly, "I think I am going"; but the next moment he cried in tones that made the by-standers thrill, so wild and piteous they were: "My daughter! my daughter! — she will miss me!"

Robert Hathorn fell on his knees, and took the old hand with one of those grasps that bring soul in contact with soul; the old soldier, who was at this moment past seeing or hearing, felt this grasp, and turned to it as an unconscious plant turns to the light. "I can't see you," said he, faintly; "but, whoever you are, take care of my child! — she is such a good child!" The hands spoke to one another still; then the old soldier almost smiled, and the anxious, frightened look of his face began to calm. "Thank God," he faltered, "they are going to take care of my child!" And

almost with these words he lost all sense, and lay pale, and calm, and motionless at their feet, and his hand could grasp Robert's no more. There was a moment of dead silence and inquiring looks. Robert looked into his face gravely and attentively.

When he had so inspected him a little while, he turned to them all, and he said, in a deep and almost a stern voice : —

"Hats off!"

They all uncovered, and stood looking like stricken deer at the old soldier as he lay. The red jacket had nothing ridiculous now. When it was new and bright it had been in great battles. They asked themselves now, Had they really sneered at this faded rag of England's glory, and as that withered hero?

"Did n't think the old man was a going to leave us like that," said one of these rough penitents, "or I 'd never ha wagged my tongue again un."

Mrs. Mayfield gave orders to have him carried up to her garret, and four stout rustics, two at his head and two at his feet, took him up the stairs, and laid him there on a decent bed. When Rachael saw the clean floor, the little carpet round the foot of the bed, the bright walls and windows, and the snowy sheets, made ready for her grandfather, she hid her face and wept, and said but two words, — "Too late! too late!"

As Rachael was following her grandfather up the stairs, she met Hickman: that worthy had watched this sorrowful business in silence; he had tears in his eyes, and, coming to her, he whispered in her ear, "Rachael, don't fret,— I will not desert you now." On the landing, a moment after, Rachael met Robert Hathorn: he said to her, "Rachael, your grandfather trusted you to me."

When Hickman said that to her, Rachael turned and looked at him.

When Robert said that to her, she lowered her eyes away from him.

CHAPTER III.

The poor battered soldier lay some hours between life and death. Just before sunrise Rachael, who had watched him all night, and often moistened his temples with vinegar, opened the window, and, as the morning air came into the room, a change for the better was observed in the patient, — a slight color stole into his pale cheeks, and he seemed to draw a fuller breath, and his heart beat more perceptibly. Rachael kneeled and prayed for him, and then she prayed to him not to leave her alone; the sun had been up about an hour, and came fiery bright into the white-washed room; for it looked towards the east, and Corporal Patrick's lips moved, but without uttering a sound. Rachael prayed for him again most fervently. About nine o'clock his lips moved, and this time he spoke: —

"— Rear rank, right wheel! —"

The next moment, a light shot into his eye. His looks rested upon Rachael: he smiled feebly, but contentedly, then closed his eyes and slumbered again.

Corporal Patrick lived. But it was a near thing; a very near thing, — he was saved by one of those accidents we call luck, — when Mrs. Mayfield's Tom rode for the doctor, the doctor was providentially out. Had he been in, our tale would be now bidding farewell to Corporal Patrick, — for this doctor was one of the pig-sticking ones. He loved to stab men and women with a tool that has slain far more than the sword in modern days; it is called "the lancet." Had he found a man insensible, he would have stabbed him, poor man! he always stabbed a fellow-creature when he caught it insensible: not very generous, was it? — now, had he drawn from those old veins one tablespoonful of that red fluid which is the life of a man, the aged man would have come to his senses only to sink the next hour, and die for

want of that vital stream stolen from him by rule.

As it was, he breathed, and came back to life by slow degrees. At first his right arm was powerless; then he could not move the right leg; but at last he recovered the use of his limbs, but remained feeble, and his poor head was sore confused: one moment he would be quite himself; another, his memory of recent events would be obscured, — and then he would shake his head and sigh. But nature was strong in him; and he got better, — but slowly.

As soon as he was able to walk, Rachael proposed to Mrs. Mayfield to return home, but Mrs. Hathorn interposed, and requested Rachael to take her own servant's place for another week, in order to let the servant visit her friends. On these terms, Rachael remained, and did the work of the Hathorns' house, and it was observed that during this period more color came to her cheek, and her listlessness and languor sensibly diminished.

She was very active and zealous in her work, and old Hathorn was so pleased with her, that he said one day to Mrs. Hathorn: "I don't care if Betsy never comes back at all; this one is worth a baker's dozen of her, this Rachael."

"Betsy will serve our turn as well in the long run," said Mrs. Hathorn, somewhat dryly and thoughtfully.

"Betsy!" replied the former, contemptuously; "there is more sense in this Rachael's forefinger than in that wench's whole carcass."

It was about two days after this that the following conversation took place between Robert Hathorn and his mother: —

"Is it true, what I hear, that Mr. Patrick talks about going next week?"

"Have not they been here long enough, Robert? I wish they may not have been here too long."

"Why too long, when you asked them to stay yourself, mother?"

"Yes, I did, and I doubt I did very wrong. But it is hard for a mother to deny her son."

"I am much obliged to you, mother, but I don't remember that ever I asked you."

"No! no. I don't say that you ever spoke your mind, Robert; but you looked up in my face, and showed your wish plain enough to *my* eye; and you see a poor foolish body like me does n't know how to say no to her boy that never vexed her. I should have been a better friend to you if I had turned my head away, and made believe not to see what is in your heart."

Robert paused awhile, then, in a low, anxious voice, he whispered: "Don't you like her, mother?"

"Yes! I like her, my poor soul. What is there to dislike in her? But I don't know her."

"But I know her as well as if we had been seven years acquainted."

"You talk like a child! How can you know a girl that comes from a strange part?"

"I 'd answer for her, mother."

"I would n't answer for any young wench of them all! I do notice she is very close; ten to one if she has not an acquaintance of some sort, good or bad."

"A bad acquaintance, mother! Never! If you had seen her through all the harvest-month, as I did, respect herself and make others respect her, you would see that girl never could have made a trip in her life."

"Now, Robert, what makes you so sad, like, if you have no misgivings about her?"

"Because, mother, I don't think she likes me so well as I do her."

"All the better," said Mrs. Hathorn, dryly; "make up your mind to that."

"Do not say so! do not say so!" said Robert, piteously.

"Well, Robert, she does not hate you, you may be sure of that. Why is she in such a hurry to go away?"

"Because she has some one in her

own country she likes better than me."

"Ay! that is the way you boys read women. More likely she is afraid of liking you too well, and making mischief in a family."

"O mother, do you think it is that?"

"There, I am a fool to tell you such things."

"O no, no, no! There is no friend like a mother."

"There is no fool like a mother, that is my belief."

"No, no! Give me some comfort, mother; tell me you see some signs of liking in her."

"Well, then, when she is quite sure you are not looking her way, I can see her eye dwell upon you as if it was at home."

"O, how happy you make me! But, mother, how you must have watched her!"

"Of course I watched her, and you too; I have seen a long while how matters were going."

"But you never spoke to Rose, or my father?"

"If I had, she would have been turned out of the house, and a good job too; but you would have fretted, you know"; and Mrs. Hathorn sighed.

"Mother, I must kiss you. I shall have courage to speak to father about it now."

"Take a thought, Robert. His heart is set upon your marrying your cousin. It would be a bitter pill to the poor old man, and his temper is very hasty. For Heaven's sake take a thought. I don't know what to do, I am sure."

"I must do it soon or late," said Robert, resolutely. "No time so good as now. Father is hasty, and he will be angry, no doubt; but after a while he will give in, I don't ask him favors every day. Do you consent, mother?"

"O Robert, what is the use asking me whether I consent? I have only one son, and he is a good one. I am afraid I could not say no to your happiness, suppose it was my duty to say no; but your father is not such a fool as I am, and I am main doubtful whether he will ever consent. I wish you could think better of it."

"I will try him, mother, no later than to-day. Why, here he comes. O, there is Mr. Casenower with him; that is unlucky. You get him away, mother, and I'll open my mind to father."

Old Hathorn came past the window, and entered the room where Robert and Mrs. Hathorn were. The farmer stumped in, and sat down with some appearance of fatigue. Mr. Casenower sat down opposite him.

That gentleman had in his hand a cabbage. He was proving to the farmer that this plant is more nutritious than the potato. The theory was German in the first instance. "There are but three nourishing principles in all food," argued Mr. Casenower, "and of those, what we call 'fibrine' is the most effective. Now, see, I put my nail to this stalk, and it readily reduces itself to a bundle of little fibres; see, those are pure fibrine, and, taken into the stomach, make the man muscular. Can anything be clearer?"

Mr. Hathorn, who had shown symptoms of impatience, replied to this effect: "That he knew by personal experience that cabbage turns to nothing but hot water in a man's belly."

"There are words to come out of a man's mouth!" objected Mrs. Hathorn.

"Better than cabbage going into it," grunted the farmer.

"Ah, you know nothing of chemistry, my good friend."

"Well, sir, you say there is a deal of heart in a cabbage?"

"I do."

"Then I tell you what I'll do with you, sir. There is some fool has been and planted half an acre of cabbages in my barley-field —"

"It was not a fool," put in Mrs. Hathorn, sharply, "it was me."

"It was not a fool, you see, sir; it was a woman," responded Hathorn, mighty dryly. "Well, sir, you train on the Dame's cabbages for a month, and all that time I'll eat nothing stronger than beef and bacon, and at the end of the month I'll fight you for a pot of beer, if you are so minded."

"This is the way we reason in the country, eh, Mr. Robert?"

"Yes, sir, it would serve father right if you took him up, sir, with his game leg; but I don't hold with cabbages for all that; a turnip is watery enough, but a cabbage and a sponge are pretty much one, it seems to me."

"Mr. Casenower," put in Mrs. Hathorn, "did n't you promise to show me a pansy in your garden, that is to win the next prize at Wallingford?"

"I did, ma'am, but you should not call it 'Pansy'; 'Heart's-ease' is bad enough, without going back to 'Pansy.' *Viola tricolor* is the name of the flower, — the scientific name."

"No," said old Hathorn, stoutly.

"No! What do you mean by no?"

"What are names for? To remember things by; then the scientifickest name must be the one that it is easiest to remember. Now, pansy is a deal easier to remember than 'vile tricolor.'"

"I am at your service, Mrs. Hathorn; come along, for Heaven's sake"; and off bustled Mr. Casenower towards the garden with Mrs. Hathorn.

"Father," said Robert, after an uneasy pause, "I have something to say to you, very particular."

"Have you, though? well, out with it, my lad!"

"Father! —"

At this moment, in bustled Mr. Casenower again. "O Mr. Robert, I forgot something. Let me tell you, now I think of it. I want you to find out this Rebecca Reid for me. She lives somewhere near, within a few miles. I don't exactly know how many. Can't you find her out?"

"Why, sir," said Robert, "it is like looking for one poppy in a field of standing wheat."

"No, no! When you go to market, ask all the farmers from different parishes whether they know her."

"Haw, haw, haw!" went Hathorn, senior. "Yes, do, Robert. Ho, ho!"

"Have you any idea what he is laughing at?" said Mr. Casenower, dryly.

"Father thinks you will make me the laughing-stock of the market, sir," said Robert, with a faint smile; "but never mind him, sir, I shall try and oblige you."

"You are a good fellow, Robert. I must go back to Mrs. Hathorn"; and off he bustled again.

"Father," began Robert; but before he could open his subject, voices were heard outside, and Mrs. Mayfield came in, followed by Richard Hickman.

"Tic! tic! tic!" said poor Robert, peevishly, for he foresaw endless interruptions.

Mr. Hickman had been for some minutes past employed in the agreeable occupation of bringing Mrs. Mayfield to the point; but, for various reasons, Mrs. Mayfield did not want to be brought to the point that forenoon. One of those reasons was, that, although she liked Hickman well enough to marry him, she liked somebody else better, and she was not yet sure as to this person's intentions. She wanted, therefore, to be certain she could not have Paul, before she committed herself to Peter. Now, certain ladies, when they do not want to be brought to the point, have ways of avoiding it that a man would hardly hit upon. One of them is, to be constantly moving about; for, they argue, "If he can't pin my body to any spot, he can't pin my soul, for my soul is contained in my body"; and there is a certain vulgar philosophy in this. Another is, to be absorbed in some small matter, that just then they cannot do

justice to the larger question, and so modestly postpone it.

"Will I be yours till death us do part? now, how can I tell you just now? such a question demands at least some attention; and look at this hole in my lace collar, which I am mending; if I don't give my whole soul to it, how can I mend it properly?"

Mr. Hickman had no sooner shown Mrs. Mayfield that he wanted to bring her to the point, than he found himself in for some hard work; twice he had to cross the farm-yard with her; he had to take up a sickly chicken and pronounce upon its ailment. He had to get some milk in a pail and give one of her calves a drink. He had to bring one cow from paddock to stall, and another from stall to paddock. Heaven knew why; and when all this and much more was done, the lady caught sight of our friends in the Hathorns' kitchen, and, crying briskly, "Come this way," led Mr. Hickman into company where she knew he could not press the inopportune topic.

"Curse her!" muttered the enamored one, as he followed her into the Hathorns' kitchen.

After the usual greetings, the farmer, observing Robert's impatience, said to Hickman: "If you will excuse me for a minute, farmer, Robert wants to speak to me; we are going towards the barn." He then beckoned Mrs. Mayfield, and whispered in her ear: "Don't let this one set you against my Robert, that is worth a hundred of him."

Mrs. Mayfield whispered in return: "And don't let your Robert shilly-shally so, because this one does not — you understand —"

"All right," replied Hathorn; "ten to one if it is not you he wants to speak to me about."

Hathorn and his son then sauntered into the farm-yard, and Hickman gained what he had been trying for so long, a quiet *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Mayfield; for all that, if a woman is one of those that have a wish, it is dangerous to drive her to the point.

"Well, Mrs. Mayfield," said he, quietly but firmly, "I am courting you this six months, and now I should be glad to have my answer. 'Yes,' or 'no,' if you please."

Mrs. Mayfield sidled towards the window; it commanded the farm-yard. Robert and his father were walking slowly up and down by the side of the farm-yard pond. Mrs. Mayfield watched them intently, then, half turning towards Hickman, she said slowly: "Why, as to that, Mr. Hickman, you have certainly come after me awhile, and I'll not deny I find you very good company; but I have been married once and made a great mistake, as you have heard, I dare say; so now I am obliged to be cautious."

"What, are you afraid of my temper, Rose? I am not reckoned a bad-tempered one, any more than yourself."

"O no! I have no fault to find with you, — only we have not been acquainted so very long."

"That is a fault will mend every day."

"Of course it will; well, when you are settled on Bix, we shall see you mostly every day, and then we shall know one another better; for, if you have no faults, I have; and then you will know better what sort of a bargain you are making: and then — we will see about it."

"Better tell the truth," said the all-observant Hickman.

"The truth!"

"Ay, that the old man wants you to marry Bob Hathorn. O, I am down upon him this many a day."

"Robert Hathorn is nothing to me," replied the Mayfield; "but, since you put him in my head, I confess I might do worse."

"How could you do worse than marry a lad who has nothing but his two arms?"

Mrs. Mayfield, looking slyly through

the window, observed Robert and his father to be in earnest conversation; this somewhat colored her answer. She replied quickly, "Better poor and honest, than half rich and three parts of a rogue!"

"Is that for me, if you please?" said Hickman, calmly but firmly.

"No! I don't say it is," replied the lady, fearful she had gone too far; "but still I wonder at your choosing this time for pressing me."

"Why not this time, as well as another, pray?" and Hickman eyed her intently, though secretly.

"Why not!" said she, and she paused; for the dialogue between Hathorn and his son was now so animated, that the father's tones reached even to her ear.

"Ay! why not?" repeated Hickman.

The lady turned on him, and, with a sudden change of manner, said very sharply, "Ask your own conscience."

"I don't know what you mean!"

"I'll tell you. This old Patrick was miscalling you, when he fell ill. They say it was a stroke of the sun, — maybe it was: but I should say passion had something to do with it too; the old man said words to you that none of the others noticed, but I did. He said as much as that you had robbed some one of what is before life in this world."

"Ay, and what is before life, I wonder?" said the satirical Hickman.

"Why, nothing," replied the frank Mrs. Mayfield, "if you go to that; but it is a common saying that a 'good name is before life,' and that is what the old man meant."

"I wonder you should take any notice of what that old man says, and above all his daughter."

"His daughter, Mr. Hickman! Why, I never mentioned his daughter, for my part. You have been and put your own bricks on my foundation."

Hickman looked confused.

"You are a fool, Richard Hickman! You have told me more than I knew, and I see more than you tell me. You have led that girl astray, and deserted her likely, you little scamp!" (Hickman was five foot ten.)

"Nonsense!" put in Hickman. "That Rachael shall never come between you and me; but I'll tell you who the girl stands between: you and your Robert, that the farmer wants to put in the traces with you against his will."

"You are a liar!" cried Rose Mayfield, coloring to her temples.

Hickman answered coolly: "Thank you for the compliment, Rose. No, it is the truth. You see, when a man is wrapped up in a woman, as I am in you, he finds out everything that concerns her; and your boy, Tom, tells me that Robert is as fond of her as a cow of a calf."

"He fond of that Rachael? No!"

"Why, Rachael is a well-looking lass, if you go to that."

"And so she is," pondered Mrs. Mayfield; and in a moment many little circumstances in Robert's conduct became clear by this new light Hickman had given her. She struggled, and recovered her outward composure. "Well," said she, stoutly, "what is it to me?"

"Why, not much, I hope. Give me your hand, Rose; *I* don't fancy any girl but you. And name the day, if you will be so good."

"No, no!" said Rose Mayfield, nearly crying with vexation. "I won't marry any of you, — a set of rogues and blockheads. And, if it is true, I don't thank you for telling me. You are a sly, spiteful dog, and I don't care how often you ride past my house without hooking bridle to the gate, Dick Hickman."

Hickman bit his lips, but he kept his temper. "What! all this because Bob Hathorn's taste is not so good as mine! Ought I to suffer for his folly?"

"O, it is not for that, don't think it! But I don't want a lover that has ruined other women; it is not lucky, to say the least."

"What, all this, because a girl jumped into my arms one day? Why, I am not so hard upon you. I hear tales about you, you know, but I only laugh, — even about Frank Fairfield and you." (Mrs. Mayfield gave a little start.) "Neither you nor I are angels, you know. Why should we be hard on one another?"

Mrs. Mayfield, red as fire, interrupted him. "My faults, if I have any, have hurt me only; but yours never hurt you, and ruined others; and you say no more about me than you know, or you will get a slap in the mouth, and there 's my door; you take it at a word, and I 'll excuse any further visits from you, Mr. Hickman."

These words, with a finger pointing to the door, and a flashing eye, left nothing for Hickman but to retire, which he did, boiling with indignation, mortification, and revenge. "This is all along of Rachael. She has blown me," muttered he, between his teeth. "I have got the bag; you sha' n't gain anything by it, Rachael!"

It will be remembered that when Patrick lay dying or dead, as he supposed, this Hickman had a good impulse, and told Rachael he would never desert her: in this he was perfectly sincere at the moment. People utterly destitute of principle abound in impulses. They have good impulses, which generally come to nothing or next to nothing; and bad impulses, which they put in practice.

Mr. Hickman had time to think over his good impulse, and, accordingly, he thought better of it, and found that Rose Mayfield was too great a prize to resign. He therefore kept out of the way more than a week (a suspicious circumstance, which Mrs. Mayfield did not fail to couple with old Patrick's words), and his pity for Rachael evaporated in all that time. "What the worse is she for me now? Hang her, I offered her money, and what not; but I suppose nothing will serve her turn but hooking me for life, or else having her spite out, and spilling my milk for me here."

It was a fixed notion in this man's mind that Rachael would do all she could to ruin his suit with Mrs. Mayfield, and when he got the "sack," or, as he vulgarly called it, "the bag," he attributed it, in spite of Rose Mayfield's denial, to some secret revelation on Rachael's part, and a furious impulse to be revenged on her took possession of him.

Now this bad impulse, unlike his good one, had no time to cool. As he went towards the stable, the Devil would have it he should meet Robert Hathorn. At sight of him our worthy acted upon his impulse. Robert, who was coming hastily from his father, with his brow knit and his countenance flushed, would have passed Hickman with the usual greeting, but Hickman would not let him off so easily.

"What, so you have got my old lass here still, Master Robert?"

"Your old lass! Not that I know of."

"Rachael Wright, you know."

"Rachael Wright your lass!"

"Ay! and a very nice lass too, till we fell out. She gave me a broad hint just now, but I am for higher game. You could not lend me a spur, could you, Mr. Robert? Mine is broken."

"No."

"Never mind; good morning! good morning!"

Hickman's looks and contemptuous tones had eked out the few words with which he had stabbed Robert, and, together with the libertine character of the man, had effectually blackened Rachael in Robert's eyes.

This done, away went the poisoner, and chuckled as he went.

Robert Hathorn stood pale as death, looking after him. To this stupefaction succeeded a feeling of sickness, and a sense of despair, and Robert sat down upon the shaft of an empty cart, and gazed with stony eye upon the ground at his feet. His feelings

were inexpressibly bitter. Where was he to hope to find a woman he could respect, if this paragon was a girl of loose conduct? Then came remorse: for this Rachael he had this moment all but quarrelled with his father, — their first serious misunderstanding. After a fierce struggle with himself, he forced himself to see that she must be wrenched out of his heart. He rose, pale but stern, after a silent agony that lasted a full hour, though to him it seemed but a minute, and went and looked after his father. He found him in the barn watching the threshers, but like one who did not see what he was looking at. His countenance was fallen and sad; the great and long-cherished wish of his heart had been shaken, and by his son; and then he had given that son bitter and angry words, and threatened him; and that son had answered respectfully, but firmly as iron, and the old man's heart began to sink.

He looked up, and there was Robert, pale and stern, looking steadfastly at him, with an expression he quite misunderstood. Old Hathorn lifted his head, and said sharply and bitterly to his son: "Well?"

"Father," said Robert, in a languid voice, "I am come to ask your pardon."

Farmer Hathorn looked astonished. Robert went on.

"I'll marry any woman you like, father, — they are all one to me now."

"Why, what is the matter, Bob? that is too much the other way."

"And if I said anything to vex you, forgive me, father, if you please."

"No! no! no!" cried old Hathorn, "no more about it, Bob; there was no one to blame but my hasty temper, — no more about it. Why, if the poor chap has n't taken it quite to heart, has n't a morsel of color left in his cheek!"

"Never mind my looks," gasped Robert.

"And don't you mind my words either, then. Robert, you have made me happier than I have been any time this twenty years!"

"I am glad of it," gasped Robert. "I'll look to this, if you have anything else to do." He wanted to be alone.

"Thank you, Bob; I want to go into the village; keep up your heart, my lad. She is the best-looking woman I know, with the best heart *I* ever met, and I am older than you, and you see the worst of her the first day; her good part you are never at the bottom of; it is just the contrary with the sly ones. There, there! I'll say no more. Good by." And away went the old farmer, radiant.

"Be happy," sobbed Robert; "I am glad there is one happy." And he sat down cold as a stone in his father's place. After a while he rose and walked listlessly about, till at last his feet took him through habit into his father's kitchen; on entering it, his whole frame took a sudden thrill, for he found Rachael there tying up her bundle for a journey. She had heard his step, and her head was turned away from the door; but near her was a small round old-fashioned mirror, and, glancing into this, Robert saw that tears were stealing down her face.

CHAPTER IV.

Old Hathorn paced down the village, with his oak stick, a happy man; but for all that he was a little mystified. But two hours ago Robert had told him he loved Rachael, and had asked his leave to marry her, and in answer to his angry, or, to speak more correctly, his violent refusal, had told him his heart was bound up in her, and he would rather die than marry any other woman. What could have worked such a sudden change in the young man's mind? "Maybe I shall find out," was his concluding reflection; and he was right; he did find out, and the information came from a most unexpected quarter. As he

passed the village public-house he was hailed from the parlor window; he looked up, and at it was Farmer Hickman, mug in hand. Now, to tell the truth, Hathorn was not averse to ale, especially at another man's expense, and, thought he, "Farmer is getting beery, looks pretty red in the face; however, I'll see if I can't pump something out of him and Rose." So he joined Hickman; and in about half an hour he also was redder in the face than at first.

If the wit is out when the wine is in, what must it be when the beer is in?

Old Hathorn and Hickman were much freer over their glass than they had ever been before, and Hathorn pumped Hickman; but inasmuch as Hickman desired to be pumped, and was rather cunninger half drunk than sober, the old farmer drew out of him nothing about Rose, but he elicited an artful and villanous mixture of truth and falsehood about Rachael Wright; it was not a vague sketch like that with which he had destroyed Robert's happiness; it was a long, circumstantial history, full of discolored truths and equivokes, and embellished with one or two good honest lies; but of these there were not many; poor Richard could not be honest even in dealing with the Devil, — a great error, since that personage is not to be cheated; honesty is your only card in any little transaction with him. The symposium broke up. Hickman's horse was led round, he mounted, bade Hathorn good day, and went of. In passing the farm his red face turned black, and he shook his fist at it, and said, "Fight it out now amongst ye." And the poisoner cantered away.

In leading Robert Hathorn and others so far, we have shot ahead of some little matters which must not be left behind, since without them the general posture which things had reached when Robert found Rachael tying up her bundle could hardly be understood.

When Mrs. Mayfield gave Hickman "the sack," or, as that coarse young man called it, "the bag," she was in a towering passion; and, not being an angel, but a female with decided virtues and abominable faults, she was just now in anything but a Christian temper, and woe to all who met her.

The first adventurer was Mr. Casenower: he saw her at a distance, for she had come out of the house, in which she found she could hardly breathe, and came towards her with a face all wreathed in smiles. Mr. Casenower had of late made many tenders of his affection to her, which she had parried, by positively refusing to see anything more than a jest in them; but Casenower, who was perfectly good-humored and light-hearted, had taken no offence at this, nor would he consider this sort of thing a refusal; in short, he told her plainly that it gave him great pleasure to afford her merriment, even at his own expense; only he should not leave off hoping until she took his proposal into serious consideration; that done, and his fate seriously pronounced, he told her she should find he was too much of a gentleman not to respect a lady's will; only, when the final "No" was pronounced, he should leave the farm, since he could not remain in it and see its brightest attraction given to another. Here he caught her on the side of her good-nature, and she replied, "Well, I am not anybody's yet." She said to herself, "The poor soul seems happy here, with his garden, and his farm of two acres, and his nonsense, and why drive the silly goose away before the time?" so she suspended the final "No," and he continued to offer admiration, and she to laugh at it.

It must be owned, moreover, that she began at times to have a sort of humorous terror of this man. A woman knows by experience that it is the fate of a woman not to do what she would like, and to do just what she would rather not, and often, though apparently free, to be fettered

by sundry cobwebs, and driven into some unwelcome corner by divers whips of gossamer. One day Mesdames Hathorn and Mayfield had looked out of the parlor window into the garden, and there they saw Mr. Casenower, running wildly among the beds, with his hat in his hand.

"What is up now?" said Mrs. Mayfield, scornfully.

"I dare say it is a butterfly," was the answer; "he collects them."

"What a fool he is, Jane."

"He is a good soul for all that."

"Fools mostly are, Jane!" said Mrs. Mayfield, very solemnly.

"Yes, Rose!"

"Look at that man; look at him well, if you please. Of all the men that pester me, that is the one that is the most ridiculous in my eye. Ha! ha! the butterfly has got safe over the wall, I 'm so glad! — Jane!"

"Well!"

"You mark my words, — I sha' n't have the butterfly's luck."

"What do you mean?"

"That man is to be my husband! — that is all."

"La, Rose, how can you talk so! you know he is the last man you will ever take."

"Of course he is, and so he will take me; I feel he will; I can't bear the sight of him, so he is sure to be the man. You will see! you will see!" and, casting on her cousin a look that was a marvellous compound of fun and bitterness, she left the room brusquely, with one savage glance flung over her shoulder into the garden.

I do not say that such misgivings were frequent; this was once in a way; still it was characteristic, and the reader is entitled to it.

Mr. Casenower then came to Mrs. Mayfield, and presented her a clove-pink from his garden; he took off his hat with a flourish, and said, with an innocent, but somewhat silly playfulness, "Accept this, fair lady, in token that some day you will accept the grower."

The gracious lady replied by knocking the pink out of his hand and saying, "That is how I accept the pair."

Mr. Casenower colored very high, and the water came into his eyes; but Mrs. Mayfield turned her back on him, and flounced into her own house. When there, she felt she had been harsh, and looking out of the window she saw poor Casenower standing dejected on the spot where she had left him! she saw him stoop and pick up the pink; he eyed it sorrowfully, placed it in his bosom, and then moved droopingly away.

"What a brute I am!" was the Mayfield's first reflection. "I hate you!" was the second.

So then, being discontented with herself, she accumulated bitterness, and in this mood flounced into the garden, for she saw Mrs. Hathorn there. When she reached her, she found that her cousin was looking at Rachael, who was cutting spinach for dinner; while the old corporal, seated at some little distance, watched his granddaughter; and as he watched her his dim eye lighted every now and then with affection and intelligence.

Mrs. Mayfield did not look at the picture; all she saw was Rachael; and after a few trivial words she said to Mrs. Hathorn in an undertone, but loud enough to be heard by Rachael: "Are these two going to live with us altogether?"

Mrs. Hathorn did not answer; she colored and cast a deprecating look at her cousin: Rachael rose from her knees, and said to Patrick in an undertone, the exact counterpart of Mrs. Mayfield's: "Grandfather, we have been here long enough, come"; and she led him into the house.

There is a dignity in silent, unobtrusive sorrow, and some such dignity seemed to belong to this village girl, Rachael, and to wait upon all she said or did; and this seemed to put everybody in the wrong who did or said anything against her. When she led off her grandfather with those few firm, sad words, in the utterance of which she betrayed no particle of

anger or pique, Mrs. Hathorn cast a glance of timid reproach at her cousin, and she herself turned paler directly; but she replied to Mrs. Hathorn's look only by a disdainful toss of the head; and, not choosing to talk upon the subject, she flounced in again and shut herself up in her own parlor; there she walked up and down like a little hyena. Presently she caught sight of the old farmer, standing like a statue, near the very place where Robert had left him after announcing his love for Rachael, and his determination to marry no other woman. At sight of the farmer, an idea struck Mrs. Mayfield: "That Hickman is a liar, after all; don't let me be too hasty in believing all this about Robert and that girl. I'll draw the farmer."

"I'll draw the farmer!" My refined reader is looking to me to explain the lady's phraseology. That which in country parlance is called "drawing" is also an art, O pencil! — men that have lived thirty or forty years, and done business in this wicked world, learn to practise it at odd times. Women have not to wait for that; it is born with most of them an instinct, not an art. It works thus; you suspect something, but you don't know: you catch some one who does know, and you talk to him as if you knew all about it. Then, if he is not quite on his guard, he lets out what you wanted to know.

Mrs. Mayfield walked up to Hathorn with a great appearance of unpremeditated wrath, and said to him: "A fine fool you have been making of me, pretending your Robert looked my way, when he is over head and ears in love with that Rachael!"

"O," cried the farmer, "what, the fool has been and told you too!"

"So it is true, then?" cried the Mayfield, sharply.

Machiavel No. 2 saw his mistake too late, and tried to hark back. "No! he is not over head and ears; it is all nonsense and folly; it will pass; you set your back to mine, and we will soon bring the ninny to his senses."

"I back you to force your son my way!" cried Rose, in a fury; "what do I care for your son or you either, you old fool! let him marry his Rachael! the donkey will find whether your mock-modest ones are better or worse than the frank ones, — ha! ha!"

"Rose," cried the farmer, illuminated with sudden hope; "if you know anything against her, you tell me, and I'll tell Robert."

"No!" said she, throwing up her nose into the air in a manner pretty to behold, "I am no scandal-monger, — it is your affair, not mine; let him marry his Rachael, ha! ha! oh!" and off she went, laughing with malice and choking with vexation.

There now remained to insult only Robert and Mrs. Hathorn. But the virago was afraid to scold Mrs. Hathorn, who she knew would burst out crying at the first hard word, and then she would have to beg the poor soul's pardon: and Robert she could not find just then. Poor fellow! at this very moment he was writhing under Hickman's insinuations, and tearing his own heart to pieces in his efforts to tear Rachael from it.

So the Mayfield ran up stairs to her own bedroom and locked herself in, for she did not want sense, and she began to see and feel that she was hardly safe to be about.

Meantime Rachael had come to take leave of Mrs. Hathorn; that good lady remonstrated, but feebly; she felt that there would never be peace now till the poor girl was gone; but she insisted upon one thing; the old man in his weak state should not go on foot.

"You are free to go or stay for me, Rachael," said she, "but, if you go, I will not have any harm come to the poor old man within ten miles of this door."

So, to get away, Rachael consented to take a horse and cart of the farmer's, and this is how it came about

that Robert found Rachael tying up her bundle of clothes. Her tears fell upon her little bundle as she tied it.

CHAPTER V.

ROBERT HATHORN had found in Hickman's insinuation a natural solution of all that had puzzled him in Rachael. She was the deserted mistress of a man whom she still loved, — acting on this he had apologized to his father, had placed his future fate with heart-sick indifference in that father's hands, and had despaired of the female sex, and resigned all hope of heart-happiness in this world. But all this time Rachael had been out of sight. She stood now before him in person, and the sight of her, beautiful, retiring, submissive, sorrowful, smote his heart and bewildered his mind. Looking at her, he could not see the possibility of this creature having ever been Hickman's mistress. He accused himself of having been too hasty; he would have given worlds to recall the words that had made his father so happy, and was even on the point of leaving the kitchen to do so; but on second thoughts he determined to try and learn from Rachael herself whether there was any truth in Hickman's scandal, and, if there was, to think of her no more.

"What are you doing, Rachael?"

"I am tying up my things to go, Master Robert."

"To go?"

"Yes! we have been a burden to your mother some time; still, as I did the work of the house, I thought my grandfather would not be so very much in the way; but I got a plain hint from Mrs. Mayfield just now."

"Confound her!"

"No, sir! we are not to forget months of kindness for a moment of ill-humor. So I am going, Mr. Robert, and now I have only to thank you for all your kindness and civility. We are very grateful, and wish we could make a return; but that is not in our power. But grandfather is an old man near his grave, and he shall pray for you by name every night, and so will I; so then, as we are very poor and have no hopes but from Heaven, it is to be thought the Almighty will hear us and bless you sleeping and waking for being so good to the unfortunate."

Robert hid his face in his hands a moment; this was the first time she had ever spoken to him so warmly and so sweetly, and at what a moment of dark suspicion did these words come to him! Robert recovered himself, and said to Rachael, "Are you sure that is the real cause of your leaving us so sudden?"

Rachael looked perplexed. "Indeed, I think so, Mr. Robert. At least I should not have gone this very day but for that."

"Ah! but you know very well you had made up your mind to go before that?"

"Of course, I looked to go, some day; we don't belong here, grandfather and I."

"That is not it, either. Rachael, there is an ill report sprung up about you."

"What is that, sir?" said Rachael, with apparent coldness.

"What is it? How can I look in your face and say anything to wound you?"

"Thank you, Mr. Robert. I am glad there is one that is inclined to show me some respect."

"Do something for me in return, dear Rachael; tell me your story, and I'll believe your way of telling it, and not another's; but, if you will tell me nothing, what can I do but believe the worst, impossible as it seems? Why are you so sorrowful? Why are you so cold, like?"

"I have nothing to tell you, Mr. Robert; if any one has maligned me, may Heaven forgive them; if you believe them, forget me. I am going away. Out of sight, out of mind."

"What! can a girl like you, that has won all our respects, go away and leave scandal behind her? No! stay and face it out, and let us put it down forever."

"Why should I trouble myself to do that, sir?"

"Because, if you do not, those who love you can love you no more."

Rachael sighed, but she wrapped herself in her coldness, and replied, "But I want no one to love me."

"You don't choose that any one should ever marry you, then?"

"No, Mr. Robert, I do not."

"You would not answer Richard Hickman so!"

"Richard Hickman!" said Rachael, turning pale.

When she turned pale, Robert turned sick.

"He says as much as that you could not say 'No' to him."

"Richard Hickman speaks of me to you!" cried Rachael, opening her eyes wildly. Then in a moment she was ice again. "Well, I do not speak of him!"

"Rachael," cried Robert, "what is all this? For Heaven's sake, be frank with me. Don't make me tear the words out of you so; give me something to believe, or something to forgive. I should believe anything you told me: I am afraid I should forgive anything you had done."

"I do not ask you to do either, sir."

"She will drive me mad!" cried Robert, frantically. "Rachael, hear me. I love you more than a woman was ever loved before! You talk of being grateful to me. I don't know why you should, but you say so. If you are, be generous, be merciful! I leave it to you. Be my wife! and then, perhaps, you will not lock your heart and your story from your husband. I cannot believe ill of you. You may have been maligned, or you may have been deceived, but you cannot be guilty. There!" cried he, wildly, "no word but one! Will you be my wife, Rachael?"

Rachael did not answer, at least in words; she wept silently.

Robert looked at her despairingly. At last he repeated his proposal almost fiercely: "I ask you, Rachael, will you be my wife?"

As he repeated this question, who should stand in the doorway but Mrs. Mayfield. She was transfixed, petrified, at these words of Robert; but, being a proud woman, her impulse was to withdraw instantly, and hear no more. Ere she was out of hearing, however, Rachael replied.

"Forgive me, Mr. Robert! I must refuse you!"

"You refuse to be my wife!"

"I do, sir!" but still she wept.

Mrs. Mayfield, as she retreated, heard the words, but did not see the tears. Robert saw the tears, but could not understand them. He gave a hasty, despairing gesture, to show Rachael that he had no more to say to her, and then he flung himself into a chair, and laid his brow on the table. Rachael glided softly away. At the door she looked back on Robert, with her eyes thick with tears. She had hardly been gone a minute when Rose Mayfield returned, and came in and sat gently down opposite Robert, and watched him intently, with a countenance in which the most opposite feelings might be seen struggling for the mastery.

CHAPTER VI.

Robert lifted his head, and saw Mrs. Mayfield. He spoke to her sullenly. "So you turn away our servants?"

"Not I," replied Mrs. Mayfield, sharply.

"It is not we that send away Rachael, it is you."

"I tell you no; do you believe that girl before me?"

"You affronted her. What had she done to you?"

"I only just asked her how long she meant to stay here, or something

like that. Hang me if I remember what I said to her! They are a bad breed, all these girls; haughty and spiteful; you can't say a word but they snap your head off." Mrs. Mayfield said no more, for at that moment Rachael came into the room with her grandfather and Mrs. Hathorn, who appeared to be smoothing matters down.

"No, Daddy Patrick," said she, in answer to some observation of the old man's, "nobody sends you away; you leave us good friends, and you are going to drink a cup of ale with us before you go."

A tray was then brought in and a jug of ale, and Patrick drank his mug of ale slowly; but Rachael put hers to her lips and set it down again.

Then Robert went and sat on the window-seat, and there he saw them bringing round the wagon to carry away Rachael and her grandfather. His heart turned dead-sick within him. He looked round for help, and looking round he saw Mrs. Mayfield bending on him a look in which he seemed to read some compassion, blended with a good deal of pique. In his despair he appealed to her: "There, they are really going; is it fair to send away like that folk that have behaved so well, and were minded to go of themselves only mother asked them to stay? See how that makes us look; and you that were always so kind-hearted, Mrs. Mayfield. Rose, dear Rose!"

Mrs. Mayfield did not answer Robert, whose appeal was made to her in an undertone; but she said to Mrs. Hathorn: "Jane, the house is yours; keep them if it suits you, I am sure it is no business of mine."

"O, thank you, Rose!" cried Robert; but his thanks were cut short by the voice of the elder Hathorn, who had just come in from the yard. "They are going," said he, "I make no complaint against them. There is no ill-will on either side; but I say they ought to go, and go they shall."

"Go they shall!" said the old corporal, with a mystified look.

The farmer spoke with a firmness and severity, and even with a certain dignity; and all felt he was not in a mood to be trifled with.

Robert answered humbly: "Father, you are master here, — no one gainsays you; but you are a just man. If you were to be cruel to the poor and honest, you would be sorry for it all your days."

Before the farmer could answer, Rose Mayfield put in hastily: "There, bid them stay, — you see your son holds to the girl, and you will have to marry them one day or other, and so best, — that will put an end to all the nonsense they talk about the boy and me. I dare say Robert is fool enough to think I wanted him for myself."

"I, Mrs. Mayfield? never. What makes you fancy that?"

"And," cried Mrs. Mayfield, as if a sudden light broke in upon her, "what are we all doing here? we can't help folks' hearts. Robert loves her. Are we to persecute Robert, an innocent lad, that never offended one of us, and has been a good son to you, and a good friend and brother to me ever since we could walk? I think the Devil must have got into my heart; but I shall turn him out, whether he likes or no. I say he shall have the girl, old man; and, more than that, I have got a thousand pounds loose in Wallingford Bank; they shall have it to stock a farm; it is little enough to give Robert, — I owe him more than that for Uxmoor, let alone years of love and good-will. There now, he is going to cry, I suppose. Bob, don't cry, for Heaven's sake; I can't abide to see a man cry."

"It is you make me, Rose, praising me just when everybody seemed to turn against me."

"You are crying yourself, Rose," whimpered Mrs. Hathorn.

"If I am, I don't feel it," replied Mrs. Mayfield.

Rachael trembled; but she said in her low, firm voice: "We are going away of our own accord, Mistress Mayfield, and we thank you kindly for this, and for all, — but we are going away."

"You don't love Robert, then?"

"No, Mrs. Mayfield," said Rachael, with the air of one confessing theft or sacrilege, "I don't love Mr. Robert!" and she lowered her eyes with their long lashes, and awaited her sentence.

"Tell that to the men," replied Rose, "you can't draw the wool over a sister's eye, young lady."

"The young woman is the only one among you that has a grain of sense," said old Hathorn, roughly. "Why don't you let her alone, — she would thank you for it."

"Can you read a woman's words, you old ass?" was the contemptuous answer.

"I am not an ass, young woman," said Hathorn, gravely and sternly, "and I am in my own house, which you seem to forget," — Rose colored up to the eyes, — "and I am the master of it, so long as it is your pleasure I should be here."

"John!" cried Mrs. Hathorn, with a deprecating air.

"And I am that young man's father, and it is his duty to listen to me, and mine not to let him make a fool of himself. I don't pretend to be so particular as Robert is, — used to be, I mean, — and I was telling him only yesterday, that suppose you have kicked over the traces a bit, as you have never broken your knees, leastways to our knowledge, Rose, it did not much matter."

"Thank you, Daddy Hathorn; much obliged to you, I am sure."

"But there's reason in roasting of eggs; this one has been off the course altogether, and therefore, I say again, she shows sense by going home, and you show no sense by trying to keep her here."

"Father," said Robert, "you go too far; we know nothing against Rachael, and till I know I won't believe anything."

"Why, Bob, I thought Hickman had told you all about it, — I understood him so, — ay, and he must too, or why did you come to me in the yard and eat humble pie?"

"I don't know what you mean by telling me all about it, father: he hinted as much as that he and Rachael had been too familiar once upon a time."

"Well?"

"Well! how often has he told the same lie of a dozen others? that is a common trick of Dick Hickman's, to pretend he has been thick with a girl, that perhaps does not know his face from Adam's. Father, I can't believe a known liar's tongue against such a face as that."

"Face as that! It is a comely one, but seems to me it does not look us so very straight in the face just now: and there's more than a liar's tongue on t'other side, there's chapter and verse, as the saying is."

"I don't understand your hints, and I don't believe that blackguard's. I am not so old as you, but I have learned that truth does not lie in hints."

"I'm older than you, and a woman's face can't make me blind and deaf to better witnesses."

"There are no better witnesses! For shame, father! Hickman is no authority with Hathorn."

"But the Parish Register is an authority," said the old man sternly, and losing all his patience.

"The Parish Register!"

"And if you look at the Parish Register of Long Compton, you will find the name of a child she is the mother of, and no father to show."

"Father!"

"Ask herself! — you see she does n't deny it."

All eyes turned and fastened upon Rachael; and those who saw her at this moment will carry her face and

her look to their graves, so fearful was the anguish of a high spirit, ground into the dust and shame; her body seemed that moment to be pierced with a hundred poisoned arrows. She rose white to her very lips, and stood in the midst of them quivering like an aspen-leaf, her eyes preternaturally bright and large, and she took one uncertain step forwards, as if to fling herself on the weapons of scorn that seemed to hem her in; and she opened her mouth to speak, but her open lips trembled, and trembled, and no sound came. And all the hearts round, even the old farmer's, began now to freeze and fear at the sight of this wild agony; and at last, after many efforts, the poor soul would have said something, God knows what, but a sudden and most unexpected interruption came. Corporal Patrick was by her side, nobody saw how; and, seizing her firmly by the arm, he forbade her to speak.

"Silence, girl!" cried the old soldier, fiercely. "I dare you to say a word to any of them!"

Then Rachael turned and clung convulsively to his shoulder, and trembled and writhed there in silence. All this while they had not observed the old man, or they would have seen that the mist had gradually cleared away from his faculties; his mind, brightened by his deep love for Rachael, was keenly awake to all that concerned her; and so her old champion stood in a moment by her side with scarce a sign left of age or weakness, upright and firm as a tower.

"Silence, girl! I dare you to say a word to any of them!"

"There," sobbed Mrs. Hathorn, "you thought the poor old man was past understanding, and now you make him drink the bitter cup, as well as her."

"Yes! I must drink my cup too," said old Patrick. "I thought I was going to die soon, and to die in peace; but I'll live and be young again, if it is but to tell ye ye are a pack of curs. The Parish Register! does the Parish Register tell you the man married her with a wife living in another part? Is it wrote down along with that child's name in the Parish Register, how his father fell on his knees to his mother, a girl of seventeen, and begged, for the dear life, she would n't take the law of him and banish him the country? What was she to think? could she think that, when his sick wife died, he'd reward her for sparing him by flying the country, not to do her right? The Parish Register! You welcome this scoundrel to your house, and you hunt his victim out like a vagabond, ye d—d hypocrites! Come, Rachael, let us crawl away home, and die in peace."

"No! no! you must not go like that," cried Mrs. Hathorn, and Robert rose, and was coming to take his hand; but he waved his staff furiously over his head.

"Keep aloof, I bid ye all," he cried; "I have fought against Bonaparte, and I despise small blackguards." He seized Rachael and drew her to the door: then he came back at them again: "'T is n't guilt you have punished; you have insulted innocence and hard fortune; you have insulted your own mothers, for you have insulted me, and I fought for them before the best and oldest of you was born, — no skulking before the enemy, girl," — for Rachael was drooping and trembling, — "right shoulders forward, MARCH!" and he almost tore her out of the house. He was great, and thundering, and terrible, in this moment of fury; he seemed a giant and the rest but two feet high. His white hair streamed, and his eyes blazed defiance and scorn. He was great and terrible by his passion and his age, and his confused sense of past battles and present insult. They followed him out almost on tiptoe. He lifted Rachael into the wagon, placed her carefully on a truss of hay in the wagon, and the carter came to the horses' heads, and looked to the house to know whether he was to start now.

Robert came out and went to Ra-

chael's side of the wagon, but she turned her head away.

"Won't you speak to me, Rachael?" said Robert.

Rachael turned her head away, and was silent.

"Very well," said Robert quietly, very quietly.

"Go on," cried old Hathorn.

The next moment there was a fearful scream from the women, and Robert was seen down among the horses' feet, and the carter was forcing them back, or the wagon would have been over him; the carter dragged him up, — he was not hurt, but very pale; he told his mother, who came running to him, that he had felt suddenly faint and had fallen, and he gave a sickly smile, and bade her not be frightened, he was better.

Rose Mayfield was as white as a sheet.

"Go on," cried the farmer, again, and at a word from the carter the horses drew the wagon out of the yard, and went away down the lane with Rachael and Patrick.

They were gone.

CHAPTER VII.

Corporal Patrick was correct in his details; the Parish Register gave a very vague outline of Rachael Wright's history. Mr. Hickman had gone through the ceremony of marrying her; nay, more, at the time, he had firmly intended the ceremony should be binding, for his wife lay dying a hundred miles off, and Rachael had at this period great expectations from her aunt, Mrs. Clayton. This Mrs. Clayton was the possessor of Bix Farm. She was a queer-tempered woman, and a severe economist; this did not prevent her allowing Patrick and Rachael a yearly sum, which helped to maintain them in homely comfort. And she used to throw out mysterious hints that, at her death, the pair would be better off than other relations of hers who dressed finer and held their heads higher at present. Unfortunately for Rachael, this aunt was alive at the period when Hickman's bigamy was discovered by old Patrick. The said aunt had never done anything of the kind herself, nobody had ever married her illegally, and she could not conceive how such a thing could take place without the woman being in fault as well as the man; so she was very cross about it, and discontinued her good offices. The Corporal wished to apply the law at once to Hickman; but he found means to disarm Rachael, and Rachael disarmed the old soldier. Rachael, young, inexperienced, and honest, was easily induced to believe in Hickman's penitence, and she never doubted that, upon his wife's death, who was known to be incurably ill, Richard would do her ample right. So meantime she agreed to do herself injustice.

Mrs. Hickman died within a short time of the exposure; but, unfortunately for Rachael, another person died a week or two before her, and that person was Rachael's aunt. No will appeared, except an old one, which was duly cancelled by the old lady herself, in the following manner: First, all the words were inked out with a pen; secondly, most of them were scratched out with a knife; lastly, a formal document was affixed and witnessed, rendering the said instrument null as well as illegible. This unfortunate testament bequeathed Bix Farm to Jack White, her graceless nephew. He had offended her after the will was made, so she annulled the will. The graceless nephew could afford to smile at these evidences of wrath; he happened to be her heir-at-law, and succeeded to Bix in the absence of all testament to the contrary. Hickman was with his dying wife in Somersetshire. The news about Bix reached him, and he secretly resolved to have nothing more to do with Rachael. To carry out this with more security, the wretch

wrote her affectionate letters from time to time, giving plausible excuses for remaining in Somersetshire; and so he carried on the game for three months after his wife was dead; he then quietly dropped the mask and wrote no more.

So matters went on for some years, until one day the graceless nephew, finding work a bore, announced Bix Farm to let. Poor Hickman had set his heart upon this Bix, and, as he could not have it for his own, he thought he should like to rent it; so he came up and made his offer, and was accepted as tenant. The rest the reader knows, I believe; but what iron passed through the hearts of Rachael and the old soldier all this time, that let me hope he knows not.

CHAPTER VIII.

The events we have recorded had no sooner taken place, than a great change seemed to come over Mrs. Mayfield. She went about her avocations as usual, but not with the same alacrity; and her spirits were so unstrung, that every now and then she burst into tears. The female servants, honest country wenches that were not sublimely indifferent, like London domestics, to everybody in the house but themselves, seeing the gloom of the house, and Mrs. Mayfield continually crying who never cried before, began to whimper for sympathy, and the house was a changed house. Robert had disappeared; and they all felt it was a charity not to ask where, or to go near him for a while: all but the mother, who could not resist the yearnings of a mother's nature; she crept silently at a distance, and watched her boy, lest perchance evil should befall him.

Mrs. Mayfield then, after many efforts to go through her usual duties, gave way altogether, and sat herself down in her own parlor, and cried over all the sorrow that had come on the farm; and as all generous natures do, if you give them time to think, she blamed herself more than any one else, and wished herself dead and out of the way, if by that means the rest could only be made happy as they used to be. While she was in this mood, her head buried in her hands, she heard a slight noise, and, looking up, saw a sorrowful face at the door: it was Mr. Casenower.

"I am come to bid you good by, Mrs. Mayfield."

"Come to bid me good by?"

"Yes; all my things are packed up except this, which I hope you will do me the favor to accept, since I am going away, and shall never tease you again."

"You never teased me, that I know," said Mrs. Mayfield, very gently. "What is it, sir?"

"It is my collection of birds' eggs: will you look at it?"

"Yes. Why, here are a hundred different sorts, and no two kinds alike."

"No two kinds? I should think not. No two eggs, you mean."

"How beautiful they look when you see them in such numbers!"

"They are beautiful. Nature is very skilful; we don't take half as many hints from her as we might. Do you observe these eggs all of one color, — these delicate blues, these exquisite drabs? If you ever wish to paint a room, take one of these eggs for a model, and you will arrive at such tints as no painter ever imagined out of his own head, I know. I once hoped we should make these experiments together; but it was not to be. Good by, dear Mrs. Mayfield!"

"O Mr. Casenower! I did not think you came to quarrel with me."

"Heaven forbid! But you love somebody else."

"No: I don't."

"Yes: you know you do; and you rejected me this morning."

"I remember I was rude to you, sir; I knocked a flower out of your

hand. Does that rankle in your heart so long?"

"Mrs. Mayfield, it is for your sake I am going, not out of anger; you know that very well."

"I know no such thing, it is out of spite, and a pretty time to show your spite, when my heart is breaking. If you went to please me, you would wait till I bid you go."

"You don't bid me go, then?"

"It does n't seem like it."

"You bid me stay?"

"Not I, sir. Don't let me keep you here against your will."

"But it is not against my will; only you seemed to hate me this morning."

"What signifies what I did this morning?" cried Mrs. Mayfield, sharply; "it is afternoon now. This morning they put me out; I wanted somebody to quarrel with; you came in my way, so I quarrelled with you. Now I have made you all unhappy, so I am miserable myself, as I deserve; and now I want somebody to comfort me, and you come to me: but, instead of comforting me, all you can think of is to quarrel with me, — oh! oh! oh!" This speech was followed by a flood of tears.

Casenower drew his chair close to hers, and took her hand, and promised to console her, — to die for her, if necessary.

"Tell me your trouble," said he, "and you shall see how soon I will cure it, if a friend can cure it. Mrs. Mayfield, — Rose, — what is the matter?"

"Dear Mr. Casenower, Robert is in love with that Rachael, — the farmer has insulted her, and sent her and her grandfather away, — Robert is breaking his heart; — and all this began with a word of mine, though that blackguard Hickman is more to blame still. But I am a woman that likes to make people happy about me; I may say I live for that; and now they are all unhappy: and if I knew where to find a dose of poison I would not be long before I would take it this day. I can't bear to make people unhappy, — oh! oh! oh!"

"Don't cry, dearest," said Casenower; "you shall have your wish; you shall make everybody happy!"

"O no, no! that is impossible now."

"No such thing, — there is no mischief that can't be cured. Look here, Rose, the old farmer is very fond of money; Rachael is poor; well, I am rich. I will soon find Robert a thousand pounds or two, and he shall have the girl he likes."

"Ah, Mr. Casenower, if money could do it I should have settled it that way myself. O, what a good creature you are! I love you, — no, I don't, I hate you, because I see how all this is to end. No, no! we have insulted the poor things and set their hearts against us, and we have set poor Robert against the girl, who is worth the whole pack of us twice counted. They are gone, and the old man's curse hangs like lead upon the house and all in it."

"Where are they gone?"

"Newbury way."

"How long?"

"An hour and a half."

"In two hours I'll have them back here."

"Don't be a fool now, talking nonsense."

"Will you lend me your mare?"

"Yes! no! The old farmer would kill us."

"Hang the old farmer! Who cares for him? Is this your house or his?"

"Mine, to be sure."

"Then I shall bring them to this house."

"Yes, but — but —"

"You have a right to do what you like in your own house, I suppose. Why, how scared you look! Where is all your spirit? You have plenty of it sometimes."

"Dear Mr. Casenower, don't tell anybody, I have not a grain of real spirit. I am the most chicken-hearted creature in the world, only I hide it when I fall in with other cowards, and so then I can bully them, you

know. I have hectored it over you more than once, and so I would again; but it would be a shame, you are so good, — and besides you have found me out."

"Well, I am not afraid of anybody, if I can please you. I will ride after them and fetch them here, and, if you are afraid to give them house-room, I will hire that empty house at the end of the lane, and this very night they shall be seated in a good house, by a good fire, before a good supper, within fifty yards of your door."

"Let me go with you. You don't know the way."

"Thank you, I should be sure to lose the way by myself; go and get your habit on. Lose no time. I will saddle the horses."

"How a man takes the command of us," thought Mrs. Mayfield. "I shall have to marry you for this, I suppose," said she, gayly, shining through her late tears.

"Not unless you like," said Casenower, proudly. "I don't want to entrap you, or take any woman against her will."

The Mayfield colored up to her eyes.

"You had better knock me down," said she. "I know you would like to"; and, casting on her companion a glance of undisguised admiration, she darted up stairs for her habit.

Ten minutes later she was in the saddle, and, giving her mare the rein, she went after our poor travellers like a flash of lightning.

Casenower followed as he might.

CHAPTER IX.

It was a glorious evening: the sun, gigantic and red, had just begun to tip the clouds with gold, and rubies, and promises of a fine day to-morrow; the farm was quiet; the farmer's homely supper was set on a table outside the door, and he and his wife sat opposite each other in silence.

Mrs. Hathorn helped herself to a morsel; but she did not care to eat it, and, in fact, she only helped herself to encourage her husband to eat. She did not succeed; Farmer Hathorn remained in a brown study, his supper untasted before him.

"Eat your supper, husband."

"Thank you, wife; I am not hungry."

"Take a drop of beer, then."

"No, Jane, I am not dry."

"You are ill, then, John; you don't look well."

"I'm well enough, I tell you."

"You are in trouble, like many more in this house."

"Me? No; I never was happier in my life!"

"Indeed! What is there to be happy about?"

"Come, now, what is it?" cried the farmer, angrily. "Out with it, and don't sit looking at me with eyes like an adder's."

"My man, you see your conscience in your wife's eyes; that is all the venom they have."

"You had better tell me Robert is in his senses to love that girl. I would cut my arm off at the shoulder sooner than consent to it."

"Would you cut your son off sooner?" said Mrs. Hathorn, with forced calmness.

"What do you mean?"

"You take very little notice of what passes, John."

"What do you mean?"

"Did n't you see what Robert tried for when the wagon started with them?"

"O, about his fainting! I could have kicked the silly fool if I had n't been his father."

"Don't you think it is very odd he should faint like that, — just under the wheel of a wagon?"

"O, when a chap swoons away, he can't choose the bed he falls on."

"A moment more, the wheel would have been on his head; if Thomas

had n't been lightsome and stopped the horses all in a minute, Robert Hathorn would have been a corpse in this house."

"Well!"

"Well!"

The old man lowered his voice: "You had better tell me you think he did it on purpose!"

Mrs. Hathorn leaned over the table to him.

"I don't think it, John; I am sure of it. Robert never fainted at all; he was as white as his shirt, but he knew what he was about, from first to last. He chose his time; and when Rachael turned her head from him, he just said, 'Very well then,' and flung himself under the wheel. What did Thomas say, who dragged him up from the horses' feet?"

"I don't know," said old Hathorn, half sulkily, half trembling.

"He said, 'That is flying in the face of Heaven, young master.' Jane heard him say it; and you know Thomas is a man that speaks but little. What did Rose Mayfield say, as she passed him next minute? 'Would you kill your mother, Robert, and break all our hearts?' You cried out, 'Go on, — go on.' Robert said his foot had slipped; and made as though he would smile at me. Ah! what a smile, John! If you had been as near it as I was, you would n't sleep this night." And Mrs. Hathorn began to sob violently, and rocked herself to and fro.

"Then send for them back," cried the farmer, suddenly starting up. "Send, before worse ill comes, — confound them!"

"They will never come back here. They are poor, but honest and proud; and we have stung them too bitterly, reproaching them with their hard lot."

"Where is he?"

"In the barn; with his face buried in the straw, like one who would n't speak, or see, or hear the world again."

"Perhaps he is asleep?"

"No, he is not asleep."

"Give him time; he'll come to when he has cried his bellyful."

"He shed tears? O no! it is too deep for that; he will die by his own hand, or fret to death. He won't be long here, I doubt: look for dark days, old man!"

"Wife," said Hathorn, trembling, "you are very hard upon me: to hear you, one would say I am a bad father, and am killing my son."

"No, — no, — John! But we were too ambitious, and we have humbled the poor and the afflicted; and Heaven does not bless them that do so, and never will."

"I don't know what to do, Jane."

"No more do I, except pray to God: that is my resource in dangers and troubles."

"Ay! ay! that can do no harm any way."

While the old couple sat there, with gloomy and foreboding hearts, suddenly a cheerful cry burst upon their ears. It was Mrs. Mayfield's voice; she came cantering up the lane with Mr. Casenower: she dismounted, flung him the bridle, and ran into her own house, where she busied herself in giving orders, and preparing two rooms for some expected visitors. A few minutes more, and, to the astonishment of Hathorn and delight of his wife, the wagon hove in sight with Rachael and Patrick.

They descended from the wagon, and were led by Mr. Casenower into Mrs. Mayfield's house, and there, after all this day's fatigues and sorrows, they found a welcome and bodily repose. But Rachael showed great uneasiness; she had been very reluctant to return; but Mrs. Mayfield had begged them both so hard, with the tears in her eyes, and Patrick had shown so strong a wish to come back, that she had yielded a passive consent. When the news of their return was brought to Robert by his mother, he betrayed himself to her; he threw his arms round her neck like a girl, — but in his downcast look, and dog-

ged manner, none of the others could discover whether he was glad or sorry. He went about his work next morning, as usual, and did not even make an inquiry about Rachael.

It was about twelve o'clock the next day, that Mrs. Mayfield observed him return from the field and linger longer than usual in the neighborhood of the house. She invited Rachael to come and look at her pet calf, and walked her most treacherously right up to Robert.

"Oh!" cried she, "you must excuse me, here is Robert, he will do as well. Robert, you take and show her my calf, the red and white one, that 's a good soul, they want me indoors." And in a moment she was gone, and left Robert and Rachael looking alternately at each other and the ground.

When Rose left these two together, she thought, innocently enough, that the business was half done, as far as they were concerned. She had not calculated the characters of the parties, and their pride. They were little nearer each other now than at twenty miles distant.

"Well, Rachael," said Robert, "I am glad you are here again; they were wrong to insult you, and now they are right to bring you back; but it is no business of mine."

"No, Master Robert," said Rachael, quietly, "and it is against my will I am here."

With these words she was moving away, when Robert intercepted her, and, intercepting her, said: "O, I don't hinder you to stay or to go. The folk say a heap of things about you and me; but did I ever say a word to you more than civility?"

"No! nor would I have suffered it."

"O, you are proud! it suits your situation," said Robert, bitterly.

"A man and a Christian would think twice ere he reminded me of my situation," cried Rachael, with flashing eyes; "and, since you can't feel for it, why speak to me at all?"

"I did not mean to affront you," said Robert, with feeling. "I pity you."

"Keep your pity for one that asks it," was the spirited reply.

"What! are we to worship you?"

"Misfortune that does not complain should meet some little respect, I think."

"Yes, Rachael, but it would be more respected if you had not kept it so close."

"Master Robert," answered Rachael, in what we have already described as her dogged manner, "poor folk must work, and ought to work; and as they won't let a girl in my situation, as you call it, do work or be honest, I concealed my fault, — if fault it was of mine."

"And I call it cruel to let a man love you, and hide your story from him."

"Nay, but I never encouraged any man to love me; so I owe my story to no man."

"Keep your secrets, then," said Robert, savagely; "nobody wants them, without it is Richard Hickman. I hear his cursed voice in the air somewhere."

"Richard Hickman!" gasped Rachael. "O, why did I come to this place to be tortured again?"

Richard Hickman had come here expressly to have a friendly talk with Mr. Patrick. Mr. Patrick owed this honor to the following circumstance.

As the wagon returned to the farm, Thomas had stopped at a certain wayside public-house, in which Mr. Hickman happened to be boozing. Patrick was breathing threats against Hickman, and insisting on Rachael's taking the law of him, and sending him out of the country. Rachael, to get rid of the subject, yielded a languid assent; and Hickman, who was intently listening, trembled in his shoes. To prevent this calamity, the prudent Richard determined to make a pseudo-spontaneous offer of some sort to the Corporal, and hush up the whole affair.

At the sight of Hickman, the Cor-

poral was for laying on, as our elder dramatists have it; but Mr. Casenower, who was there, arrested his arm, and proposed to him to hear what the man had to say.

"Well," cried Patrick, "let him speak out then before them all,— they have all seen us affronted through his villany. Where is Rachael?"

So then the Corporal came round to where Rachael stood, pale as death; and Robert sat pale, too, but clenching his teeth like one who would die sooner than utter a cry, though many vultures, called passions, were gnawing the poor lad's heart at this moment; and, to make matters worse, both Mr. and Mrs. Hathorn, seeing this assemblage, were drawn by a natural curiosity to join the group.

And here Mr. Hickman's brass enabled him to cut a more brilliant figure than his past conduct justified; he cast a sly, satirical look at them all, especially at poor Robert, and, setting his back to the railings, he opened the ball thus:—

"I come to speak to Mrs. Mayfield; she says, 'Speak before all the rest.' With all my heart. I come to say three words to Mr. Patrick; 'Speak before all the rest,' says he; well, why not? it is a matter of taste. Mr. Patrick, I have done you wrong, and I own it; but you have had your revenge. You have told the story your way, and the very boys are for throwing stones at me here, and you have set Mrs. Mayfield against me, that used to look at me as a cat does at cream."

"As a cat does at water, you mean,—you impudent, ugly dog."

"Keep your temper, my darling; you were for having everything said in public, you know. Well, now let us two make matters smooth, old man. How much will you take to keep your tongue between your teeth after this?"

Patrick's reply came in form of a question addressed to the company in general.

"Friends, since Corporal Patrick of the 47th Foot was ill amongst you, and partly out of his senses, has he done any dirty action, that this fellow comes and offers him money in exchange for a good name?"

"No, Mr. Patrick," said Robert, breaking silence for the first time. "You are an honest man, and a better man than ever stood in Dick Hickman's shoes."

Hickman bit his lip, and cast a wicked glance at Robert.

"And your daughter is as modest a lass as ever broke bread, for all her misfortune," cried Mrs. Hathorn.

"And none but a scoundrel would hope to cure the mischief he has done with money," cried the Mayfield.

"Spare me, good people," said Hickman, ironically.

"Ay, spare him," said Patrick, simply. "I have spared him this five years for Rachael's sake; but my patience is run out," roared the old man; and, lifting his staff, he made a sudden rush at the brazen Hickman. Casenower and Old Hathorn interposed.

"Let him alone," said Hickman; "you may be sure I sha'n't lift my hand against fourscore years. I'll go sooner," and he began to saunter off.

"What! you are a coward as well, are you?" roared Patrick. "Then I pity you. Begone, ye lump of dirt, with your idleness, your pride, your meanness, your money, and the shame of having offered it to a soldier like me, that has seen danger and glory."

"Well done, Mr. Patrick!" cried Hathorn; "that is an honor to a poor man to be able to talk like that."

"Yes, Mr. Patrick, that was well said."

"It is well said, and well done."

Every eye was now bent with admiration on Patrick, and from him they turned with an universal movement of disdain to Hickman. The man writhed for a moment under this human lightning, difficult to resist, and then it was he formed a sudden

resolution that took all present by surprise. Conscience pricked him a little, Rachael's coldness piqued him, jealousy of Robert stung him, general disdain annoyed him, and he longed to turn the tables on them all. Under this strange medley of feelings and motives, he suddenly wheeled round, and faced them all, with an air of defiance that made him look much handsomer than they had seen him yet, and he marched into the middle of them.

"I'll show you all that I am not so bad as you make me out, — you listen, old man. Rachael, you say that you love me still, and that 't is for my sake you refuse Bob Hathorn, as I believe it is, and the Devil take me if I won't marry you now, for all that is come and gone." He then walked slowly and triumphantly past Robert Hathorn, on whom he looked down with superior scorn, and he came close up to Rachael, who was observed to tremble as he came near her. "Well, Rachael, my lass, I am Richard Hickman, and I offer you the ring before these witnesses, — say yes, and you are mistress of Bix Farm, and Mrs. Hickman. O, I know the girl I make the offer to," added he, maliciously; "if you could not find out what she is worth, I could. Where are you all now? — name the day, Rachael, here is the man."

Rachael made no answer.

It was a strange situation, so strange that a dead silence followed Hickman's words. Marriage offered to a woman before a man's face who had tried to kill himself for her but yesterday, and offered by a man who had neglected her entirely for five years, and had declined her under more favorable circumstances. Then the motionless silence of the woman so addressed, — they all hung upon her lips, poor Mr. Casenower not excepted, who feared that, now Rachael was to be Mrs. Hickman, Robert might turn to Mrs. Mayfield and crush his new-raised hopes.

As for Robert, he did everything he could to make Rachael say "yes" to Hickman. He called up a dogged look of indifference, and held it on his face by main force. It is to be doubted, though, whether this imposed on Rachael. She stole a single glance at him under her long lashes, and at last her voice broke softly, but firmly, on them all, and it sounded like a bell, so hushed were they all, and so highly strung was their attention and expectation.

"I thank you, Richard Hickman; but I decline your offer."

"Are you in earnest, little girl?"

"Rachael," said Patrick, "think, — are you sure you know your own mind?"

"Grandfather, to marry a man, I must swear in the face of Heaven to love and honor him. How could I respect Richard Hickman? If he was the only man left upon the earth, I could not marry him, and I would not. I would rather die!"

Robert drew a long breath.

"You have got your answer," said Patrick, "so now, if I was you, I'd be off."

"If I don't I'm a fool. I shall go to my uncle, he lives ninety miles from here, and you'll see I shall get a farm there and a wife and all, if so be you don't come there a reaping, Mr. Patrick."

"Heaven pardon you, then," said the old man, gravely. "You are but young; remember it is not too late to repair your ill conduct to us by good conduct to others, — so now good afternoon."

"Good afternoon, Daddy Patrick," said Hickman, with sudden humility. "Your servant, all the company," added he, taking off his hat. So saying, he went off. He had no sooner turned the corner than he repented him of the manner of his going; so, putting his hands in his pockets, he whistled the first verse of "The Ploughboy," until out of hearing. As these last sounds of Hickman died away, they all looked at one

another in silence. Old Hathorn was the first to speak.

"That was uncommon spirity to refuse Hickman," said he, bluntly; "but you have too much pride, both of you!"

"No, not I, farmer," said the old man, sorrowfully; "I have been proud, and high-spirited, too; but it is time that passed away from me. I am old enough to see from this world into another, and from this hour to my last (and that won't be long, I hope), I am patient; the sky is above the earth; my child has had wrong, — cruel, bitter, undeserved wrong; but we will wait for Heaven's justice, since man has none for us, and we will take it when it comes, here or hereafter."

The fiery old man's drooping words brought the water into all their eyes, and Robert, in whose mind so sore a struggle had been raging, sprang to his feet.

"You speak well," he cried; "you are a righteous man, and my ill pride falls before your words; it is my turn to ask your daughter of you. Rachael, you take me for husband and friend for life. I loved you well enough to die for you, and now I love you well enough to live for you; Rachael, be my wife, — if you please."

"She won't say 'No!' this time," cried Rose Mayfield, archly.

"Thank you, Robert," said Rachael, mournfully. "I am more your friend than to say 'Yes!'"

"Rachael," cried Mrs. Hathorn, "if it is on our account, I never saw a lass I would like so well for a daughter-in-law as yourself."

"No, mother," said Robert; "it is on account of father. Father, if you will not be offended, I shall put a question to you that I never thought to put to my father. Have I been a good son or a bad son to you these eight-and-twenty years?"

"Robert!" cried the old man, in a quivering tone, that showed these simple words had gone through and through his heart. Then he turned to Rachael: "My girl, I admire your pride; but have pity on my poor boy and me."

"And on yourself," put in Mrs. Mayfield.

"May Heaven bless you, Mr. Hathorn!" said Rachael. "If I say 'No!' to Robert, I have a reason that need offend no one. Folk would never believe I was not in fault; they would cast his wife's story in his teeth, and sting us both to death, for he is proud, and I am proud too. And what I have gone through, — O, it has made me as bitter as gall! — as bitter as gall!"

"Rachael Wright," cried the old Corporal, sternly, "listen to me!"

"Rachael Wright," yelled Casenower. 'O gracious Heavens! — Rachael Wright, — it is — it must be. I knew it was an odd combination, — I got it into my head it was 'Rebecca Reid.' Is this Rachael Wright, sir?"

"Of course it is," said the Corporal, peevishly.

"Then I have got something for her from my late partners. I'll find it, — it is at the bottom of my seeds,"; and away scampered Casenower.

He presently returned, and interrupted a rebuke Mr. Patrick was administering to Rachael, by giving her a long envelope. She opened it with some surprise, and ran her eye over it, for she was what they call in the country a capital scholar. Now, as she read, her face changed and changed like an April sky, and each change was a picture and a story. They looked at her in wonder as well as curiosity. At last a lovely red mantled in her pale cheek, and a smile like a rainbow, a smile those present had never seen on her face, came back to her from the past. The paper dropped from her hands as she stretched them out, like some benign goddess or nymph, all love, delicacy, and grace.

"Robert," she cried, and she need have said no more, for the little word "Robert," as she said it, was a volume of love, — "Robert, I love, I

always loved you. I am happy — happy — happy!" and she threw her arm round Robert's neck, and cried and sobbed, and, crying and sobbing, told him again and again how happy she was.

"Hallo!" cried Hathorn, cheerfully, "wind has shifted in your favor, apparently, Bob."

Mrs. Mayfield picked up the paper. "This has done it," cried she, and she read it out *pro bono.* The paper contained the copy of a will made by Rachael's aunt, a year before she died. The sour old lady, being wroth with Rachael on account of her misconduct in getting victimized, but not quite so wroth as with her graceless nephew, had taken a medium course. She had not destroyed this will, as she did the other, by which graceless nephew was to benefit, but she hid it in the wall, safe as ever magpie hid thimble, and, dying somewhat suddenly, she died intestate to all appearance. This old lady was immeasurably fond of the old ramshackly house she lived in. So after a while, to show his contempt of her, graceless nephew had the house pulled down; the workmen picked out of the wall the will in question. An old servant of the lady, whom graceless nephew had turned off, lived hard by, and was sorrowfully watching the demolition of the house, when the will was picked out. Old servant read the will, and found herself down for £100. Old servant took the will to a firm of solicitors, no other than Casenower's late partners. They sent down to Rachael's village; she and Patrick were gone; a neighbor said they were reaping somewhere in Oxfordshire. The firm sent a copy of the will to Casenower as a forlorn hope, and employed a person to look out for Rachael's return to her own place, as the best chance of doing business with her. By the will, £2,000 and Bix Farm were bequeathed to Rachael.

"Bix Farm! Three hundred acres!" cried Hathorn.

"Bix Farm, — the farm Hickman is on," cried Rose Mayfield. "Kick him out, he has no lease. If you don't turn him out neck and crop before noon to-morrow, I am a dead woman."

"The farm is Robert's," said Rachael; "and so is all I have to give him, if he will accept it." And, though she looked at Mrs. Mayfield, she still clung to Robert.

Robert kissed her, and looked so proudly at them all! "Have I chosen ill?" said Robert's eyes.

CHAPTER X.

When everybody sees how a story will end, the story is ended.

Robert and Rachael live on their own farm, Bix; Corporal Patrick sits by their fireside.

People laugh at Mr. Casenower's eccentricities; but it is found unsafe to laugh at them in presence of Mrs. Casenower, late Mayfield.

I think I cannot conclude better than by quoting a few words that passed between Mrs. Hathorn and Corporal Patrick, as they all sat round one table that happy evening.

"Rose," said this homely, good creature, "I do notice that trouble comes to all of us at one time or other; and I think they are the happiest that have their trouble (like these two children) in the morning of their days."

"Ay, dame," said the Corporal, taking up the word, "and after that a bright afternoon, and a quiet evening, — as mine will be now, please God!"

Friendly reader (for I have friendly as well as unfriendly readers), I do not wish you a day without a cloud, for you are human, and I, though a writer, am not all humbug. But, in ending this tale, permit me to wish you a bright afternoon, and a tranquil evening, and, above all, a clear sky when the sun goes down.

ART:

A DRAMATIC TALE.

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A DRAMATIC TALE.

EARLY in the last century, two young women were talking together in a large apartment, richly furnished. One of these was Susan, cousin and dependant of Mrs. Anne Oldfield; the other was a flower-girl, whom that lady had fascinated by her scenic talent. The poor girl was but one of many persons over whom Mrs. Oldfield had cast a spell; and yet this actress had not reached the zenith of her reputation.

The town, which does not always know its own mind about actors, applauded one or two of her rivals more than her, and fancied it admired them more.

Oldfield was the woman (there is always one) who used the tones of nature upon the stage, in that day; she ranted at times like her neighbors, but she never ranted out of tune like them; her declamation was nature, alias art, — thundering; theirs was artifice, — raving. Her treatment of words was as follows: she mastered them in the tone of household speech; she then gradually built up these simple tones into a gorgeous edifice of music and meaning; but though dilated, heightened, and embellished, they never lost their original truth. Her rivals started from a lie, so, the higher they soared, the further they left truth behind them; — they do the same thing now, pretty universally.

The public is a very good judge; and no judge at all of such matters: I will explain.

Let the stage voice and the dramatic voice, — the artificial and the artistic, — the bastard and the legitimate, — the false and the true, — be kept apart upon separate stages, and there is no security that the public will not, as far as hands go, applaud the monotone, or lie, more than the melodious truth. But set the lie and the truth side by side, upon fair terms, and the public becomes what the critics of this particular art have never been, — a critic; and stage bubbles, that have bubbled for years, are liable to burst in a single night.

Mrs. Oldfield was wise enough, even in her generation, to know that the public's powers of comparison require that the things to be compared shall be placed cheek by jowl before it; and this is why she had for some time manœuvred to play, foot to foot, against Mrs. Bracegirdle, the champion of the stage.

Bracegirdle, strong in position, tradition, face, figure, and many qualities of an actor, was by no means sorry of an opportunity to quench a rising rival; and thus the two ladies were to act together in "The Rival Queens," within a few days of our story.

Roxana . . MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.
Statira . . MRS. OLDFIELD.

The town, whose heart at that epoch was in the theatre, awaited this singular struggle in a state of burning excitement we can no longer realize.

Susan Oldfield, first cousin of the

tragedian, was a dramatic aspirant. Anne's success having travelled into the provinces, her aunt, Susan's mother, said to Susan, who was making a cream-cheese, "You go an' act too, lass!"

"I will," said Susan, a making of cream-cheese.

Anne's mother remonstrated, "She can't do it."

"Why not, sister?" said Susan's mother, sharply.

Then ensued some reasoning.

"Anne," said the tragedian's mother, "was born clever. I can't account for it. She was always mimicking. She took off the exciseman, and the farmers, and her grandmother, and the very parson, — how she used to make us laugh! Mimicking! why, it was like a looking-glass, and the folks standing in front of it, and speaking behind it, all at one time. Once I made her take me off; she was very loath, poor lass. I think she knew she could not do it so well as the rest; it was n't like, though it made them all laugh more than the others; but the others were as like as fagot to fagot. Now, Susan, she can't take off nothing, without 't is the scald cream from the milk, and I 've seen me beat her at that; I 'm not bragging."

To this piece of ratiocination, Susan's mother opposed the following: —

"Talent is in the blood," said she. (This implies that great are all the first cousins of the great.)

Anne's mother might have weakened this by examples at her own door, to wit, the exciseman, who was a clever fellow, and his son an ass. But she preferred keeping within her own line of argument, and as the ladies floated, by a law of their nature, away from that to which lawyers tend, an issue, they drifted divaguely over the great pacific ocean of feminine logic. At last a light shot into Anne's mamma: she found *terra firma*, i. e. an argument too strong for refutation.

"Besides, Jane," said she, "I want your Susan to churn! So there 's an end!"

Alas! she had underrated the rival disputant. Susan's mother took refuge in an argument equally irrefragable: she packed up the girl's things that night, and sent her off by coach to Anne next morning.

Susan arrived, told her story and her hopes on Anne's neck. Anne laughed, and made room for her on the third floor. The cousins went to the theatre that evening, the aspirant in front.

Susan passed through various emotions, and when Belvidera "gazed, turned giddy, raved, and died," she ran to the stage door, with some misgivings whether she might not be wanted to lay her cousin out. In Anne's dressing-room she found a laughing dame, who, whilst wiping off her rouge, told her she was a fool, and asked her rather sharply, "how it went."

"The people clapped their hands! I could have kissed them," said Susan.

"As if I could not hear that, child," said Anne. "I want to know how many cried where you were — "

"Now, how can I tell you, cousin, when I could not see for crying myself?"

"You cried, — did you? I am very glad of that!"

"La, cousin!"

"It does not prove much, but it proves more than their clapping of hands. You shall be my barber's block, — you don't understand me, — all the better, — come home to supper."

At supper, the tragedian made the dairymaid tell her every little village event; and, in her turn, recalled all the rural personages; and, reviving the trick of her early youth, imitated their looks, manners, and sentiments, to the life.

She began with the exciseman, and ended with the curate, — a white-headed old gentleman, all learning, piety, and simplicity. He had seen

in this beautiful and gifted woman only a lamb that he was to lead up to heaven, — please God.

The naughtiest things we do are sure to be the cleverest, and this imitation made Susan laugh more than the others.

But in the midst of it the mimic suddenly paused, and her eye seemed to turn inwards: she was quite silent for a moment.

Ah! Oldfield, in that one moment I am sure your heart has drunk many a past year. It is away to the banks of Trent, to grass and flowers, and days of innocence, to church-bells and a cottage porch, and your mother's bosom, my poor woman, — princess of the stage.

She faltered out: "But he was a good man. O yes! yes! yes! he was a good man; he admired me more then than he would now! None like him shine on my path now." And she burst into a fit of crying.

Susan cried with her, without in the least knowing what was the matter. And these most dissimilar beings soon learned to love one another. The next day Anne took the gauge of Susan's entire intellects; and, by way of comment on the text of Susan, connected her with dramatic poetry, as Mrs. Oldfield's dresser.

Susan then had been installed about three months, when she was holding that conversation with the flower-girl, which I have too long interrupted.

"It is an odd thing to say, but I think you are in love with my cousin Anne."

"I don't know," was the answer. "I am drawn to her by something I cannot resist: I followed her home for three months before I spoke to you. Will she not be angry at my presumption?"

"La! Of course not: it is not as if you were one of these impudent men that follow her about, and slip notes into every mortal thing, — her carriage, her prayer-book."

Now Susan happened to be laying out the new dress for Statira, which had just come in; and, in a manner singularly apropos, no less than two nice little notes fell out of it as she spoke.

The girls looked at them, as they lay on the floor, like deer looking askant at a lapdog.

"Oh!" said the votary of Flora; "they ought to be ashamed."

"So they ought," cried Susan. "I'd say nothing," added she, "if some of them were for me. But I shall have them when I am an actress."

"Are you to be that? Ah! you will never be like *her!*"

"Why not? She is only my mother's sister's daughter, bless you. Anne was only a country lass like me, at first starting, and that is why my mother sent me here, because, when talent is in a family, don't let one churn all the butter, says she."

"But can you act?" interposed the other.

"Can't I?" was the answer.

> "His fame survives the world in deathless story,
> Nor heaven and earth combined can match his glory."

These lines, which in our day would be thought a leetle hyperbolical, Susan recited with gestures equally supernatural.

"Bless you," added she, complacently: "I could act fast enough, if I could but get the words off. Can you read?"

"Yes!"

"Handwriting? Tell the truth, now!"

"Yes! I can indeed."

"Handwriting is hard, is it not?" said Susan; "but a part beats all: did ever you see a part?"

"No!"

"Well, I'll tell ye, girl! there comes a great scratch, and then some words: but don't you go for to say those words, because they belong to another gentleman, and he might n't like it. Then you come in, and then

another scratch. And I declare it would puzzle Old Scratch to clear the curds from the whey — "

Susan suddenly interrupted herself, for she had caught sight of a lady slowly approaching from an adjoining room, the door of which was open. "Hush!" cried Susan; "here she is! alack, she is not well! O dear! she is far from well!" And, in point of fact, the lady slowly entered the apartment, laboring visibly under a weight of disease. The poor flower-girl, naturally thinking this no time for her introduction, dropped a bouquet on the table and retreated precipitately from the den of the sick lioness.

Then the lady opened her lips, and faltered forth the following sentence: —

"I go no further, let me rest here, Œnone!"

"Do, cousin!" said Susan, consolingly.

"I droop, I sink, my strength abandons me!" said the poor invalid.

"Here 's a chair for y', Anne," cried Susan. "What is the matter?"

On this, the other, fixing her filmy eyes upon her, explained, slowly and faintly, that, "'Her eyes were dazzled with returning day; her trembling limbs refused their wonted stay.'

"Ah!" sighed she, and tottered towards the chair.

"She 's going to faint, — she 's going to faint!" cried poor Susan. "O dear! Here, quick! smell to this, Anne."

"That will do, then," said the other, in a hard, unfeeling tone. "I am fortunate to have satisfied your judgment, madam," added she.

Susan stood petrified, in the act of hurrying with the smelling-bottle.

"That is the way I come on in that scene," explained Mrs. Oldfield, yawning in Susan's sympathetic face.

"Acting, by jingo!" screamed Susan. "You ought to be ashamed; I thought you were a dead woman. I wish you would n't," cried she, flying at her like a hen; "tormenting us at home, when there 's nobody to see."

"It is my system, — I aim at truth. You are unsophisticated, and I experiment on you," was the cool excuse.

"Cousin, when am *I* to be an actress?" inquired Susan.

"After fifteen years' labor, perhaps," was the encouraging response.

"Labor! I thought it was all in— spi—ration!"

"Many think so, and find their error. Labor and Art are the foundation, — Inspiration is the result."

"O Anne," cried Susan, "now do tell me your feelings in the theatre."

"Well, Susan, first, I cast my eyes around, and try to count the house."

"No, no, Anne, I don't mean that."

"Well, then, child, at times upon the scene, — mind, I say at times, — the present does fade from my soul, and the great past lives and burns again; the boards seem buoyant air beneath me, child; that sea of English heads floats like a dream before me, and I breathe old Greece and Rome. I ride on the whirlwind of the poet's words, and wave my sceptre like a queen, — ay, and a queen I am! — for kings govern millions of bodies, but I sway a thousand hearts! But, to tell the truth, Susan, when all is over, I sink back to woman, — and often my mind goes home, dear, to our native town, where Trent glides so calmly through the meadows. I pine to be by his side, far from the dust of the scene, and the din of life, — to take the riches of my heart from flatterers, strangers, and the world, and give them all, all, to one faithful heart, large, full, and loving as my own! Where's my dress for Statira, hussy?" She snapped this last with a marvellous quick change of key, and a sudden sharpness of tone peculiar to actresses when stage-dresses are in question.

"Here it is. O, is n't it superb?"

"Yes, it is superb," said Oldfield, dryly; "velvet, satin, and ostrich-feathers, for an Eastern queen. The

same costume for Belvidera, Statira, Clytemnestra, and Mrs. Dobbs. O prejudice! prejudice! The stage has always been fortified against common sense! Velvet Greeks, periwigged Romans, — the audience mingling with the scene, — past and present blundered together! — English fops in the Roman forum, taking snuff under a Roman matron's nose (that's me), and cackling out that she does it nothing like (no more she does) — nothing like Peggy Porteous, — whose merit was that she died thirty years ago, whose merit would have been greater had she died fifty years ago, and much greater still had she never lived at all."

Here Susan offered her half a dozen letters, including the smuggled notes; but the sweet-tempered soul (being for the moment in her tantrums) would not look at them. "I know what they are," said she; "vanity, in marvellous thin disguises; my flatterers are so eloquent, that they will persuade me into marrying poor old Mannering, — every morning he writes me four pages, and tells me my duty; every evening he neglects his own, and goes to the theatre, which is unbecoming his age, I think."

"He looks a very wise gentleman," observed Susan.

"He does," was the rejoinder, "but his folly reconciles me in some degree to his wisdom; so, mark my words, I shall marry my silly sage. There, burn all the rest but his — no! don't burn the letter in verse!"

"In verse?"

"Yes! I won't have him burnt either, — for he loves me, poor boy! Find it, Susan; he never misses a day. I think I should like to know that one."

"I think this is it," said Susan.

"Then read it out expressively, whilst I mend this collar. So then I shall estimate your progress to the temple of Fame, ma'am."

It is not easy to do justice on paper to Susan's recitative; but, in fact, she read it much as school-boys scan, and what she read to her cousin for a poet's love hopped thus: —

"'Excūse — mĕ dēar—ĕst frĭend — ĭf I — shoŭld appēar
Tŏŏ prĕss—ĭng bŭt — ăt my — yeărs ōne — hăs nŏt
Mŭch tīme — tŏ lōse — ănd yōŭr — gŏŏd sēnse — I fēĕl — '"

"My good sense!" cried Mrs. Oldfield, "how can that be poetry?"

"It is poetry, I know," remonstrated Susan. "See, cousin, it's all of a length."

"All of a length with your wit, — that is the Mannering prose."

"Drat them, if they write in lines, how is one to know their prose from their verse?" said Susan, spitefully.

"I'll tell you, Susan," said the other, soothingly; "their prose is something as like Mannering as can be, their verse is something in this style: —

"You were not made to live from age to age;
The dairy yawns for you, — and not the stage!"

"He! he!"

She found what she sought, and, reading out herself the unknown writer's verses, she said, with some feminine complacency, "Yes! this is a heart I have really penetrated."

"I've penetrated one, too," said Susan.

"Indeed!" was the reply; "how did you contrive that, — not with the spit, I hope?"

Thus encouraged, Susan delivered herself most volubly of a secret that had long burned in her. She proceeded to relate how she had observed a young gentleman always standing by the stage-door as they got into their chariot, and when they reached home, somehow, he was always standing there too. "It was not for you, this one," said Susan, hastily, "because you are so wrapped up he could not see you." Then she told her cousin how, once, when they were walking separately, this same young gentleman had said to her, most tenderly, "Madam, you are in the service of

Mrs. Oldfield?" and, on another occasion, he had got as far as, "Madam," when unfortunately her cousin looked round, and he vanished. Susan, then throwing off the remains of her reserve, and clasping her hands together, confessed she admired him as much as he did her. Susan gave this reason for her affection: "He is, for all the world, like one of the young tragedy princes, and you know what ducks they are."

"I do, to my cost," was the caustic reply. "I wish, instead of talking about this silly lover of yours, who must be a fool, or he would have made a fool of you long ago, you would find out who is the brave young gentleman who risked his life for me last month. Now I think of it, I am quite interested in him."

"Risked his life! — and you never told me, Anne!"

"Robert told you, of course."

"No, indeed!"

"Did he not? — then I will tell you the whole story. You have heard me speak of the Duchess of Tadcaster?"

"No, cousin, never!"

"I wonder at that! Well, she and Lady Betsy Bertie and I used to stroll in Richmond Park with our arms round one another's waists, like the Graces, more or less, and kiss one another, ugh! and swear a deathless friendship, like liars and fools as we are. But her Grace of Tadcaster had never anything to do, and I had my business, so I could not always be plagued with her; so for this the little idiot now aspires to my enmity, and, knowing none but the most vulgar ways of showing a sentiment, she bids her coachman drive her empty carriage against mine, containing me. Child, I thought the world was at an end: the glasses were broken, the wheels locked, and all my little sins began to appear such big ones to me; and the *brute* kept whipping the *horses*, and they plunged so horribly, when a brave young gentleman sprang to their heads, tore them away, and gave her nasty coachman such a caning." Here Oldfield clinched a charming white fist; then, lifting up her eyes, she said tenderly, "Heaven grant no harm befell him afterwards, for I drove off, and left him to his fate!"

Charming sensibility! an actress's!

In return for this anecdote, Susan was about to communicate some further particulars on the subject which occupied all her secret thoughts, when she was interrupted by a noise and scuffle in the anteroom, high above which were heard the loud, harsh tones of a stranger's voice exclaiming, "But I tell ye I will see her, ye saucy Jack."

Before this personage bursts upon Mrs. Oldfield, and the rest of us, I must go back and take up the other end of my knot in the ancient town of Coventry.

Nathan Oldworthy dwelt there; a flourishing attorney; he had been a clerk; he came to be the master of clerks; his own ambition was satisfied, but his son Alexander, a youth of parts, became the centre of a second ambition. Alexander was to embrace the higher branch of the legal profession: was to be, first pleader, then barrister, then King's counsel, — lastly, a judge; and contemporaneously with this final distinction, the old attorney was to sing "Nunc Dimittis," and "Capias" no more.

By-standers are obliging enough to laugh at such schemes; but why? The heart is given to them, and they are no laughing matter to those who form them: such schemes destroyed, the flavor is taken out of human lives.

When Nathan sent his son to London, it was a proud, though a sad day for him; hitherto he had looked upon their parting merely as the first step of a glorious ladder; but when the coach took young Alexander out of sight, the father found how much he loved him, and paced very, very slowly home, while Alexander glided contentedly on towards London.

Now, "London" means a different thing to every one of us; to one, it is the Temple of Commerce; to another,

of Themis; to a third, of Thespis; and to a fourth, of the Paphian Venus; and so on, because we are all much narrower than men ought to be. To Nathan Oldworthy it was the sacred spot where grin the courts of law. To Alexander it was the sacred spot where (being from the country) he thought to find the nine Muses in bodily presence, — his favorite Melpomene at their head. Nathan knew next to nothing about his own son, a not uncommon arrangement. Alexander, upon the whole, rather loathed law, and adored poetry. In those days youths had not learned "to frown in a glass, and write odes to despair," and be dubbed a duck by tender beauty confounding sulks with sorrow. Alexander had to woo the Muse clandestinely, and so wooed her sincerely. He went with a manuscript tragedy in his pocket called "Berenice," which he had rewritten and reshaped three several times; with a head full of ideas, and a heart turned to truth, beauty, and goodness. Arrived there, he was installed in the neighborhood, and under the secret surveillance, of his father's friend, Timothy Bateman, Solicitor of Gray's Inn.

If you had asked Alexander Oldworthy, upon the coach, who is the greatest of mankind, his answer would have been instantaneous, a true poet! But the first evening he spent in London raised a doubt of this in his mind, for he discovered a being brighter, nobler, truer, greater, than even a poet.

At four Alexander reached London. At five he was in his first theatre.

That sense of the beautiful which belongs to genius made him see beauty in the semicircular sweep of the glowing boxes; in gilt ornaments glorious with light; and, above all, in human beings gayly dressed, and radiant with expectation. And all these things are beautiful; only gross, rustic senses cannot see it, and blunted town senses can see it no longer.

Before the play began, music attacked him on another side; and all combined with youth and novelty to raise him to a high key of intellectual enjoyment; and when the ample curtain rose, slowly and majestically, upon Mr. Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," it was an era in this young life.

Poetry rose from the dead before his eyes this night. She lay no longer entombed in print. She floated around the scene, ethereal, but palpable. She breathed and burned in heroic shapes, and godlike tones, and looks of fire.

Presently there glided among the other figures one that by enchantment seized the poet's eye, and made all that his predecessors had ever writ in praise of grace and beauty seem tame by comparison.

She spoke, and his frame vibrated to this voice. All his senses drank in her great perfections, and he thrilled with wonder and enthusiastic joy, that this our earth contained such a being. He seemed to see the Eve of Milton, with Madonna's glory crowning her head, and immortal music gushing from her lips.

The lady was, in point of fact, Mrs. Oldfield, — the Belvidera of the play.

Alexander thought he knew "Venice Preserved" before this; but he found, as the greatest wits must submit to discover, that in the closet a good play is but the corpse of a play; the stage gives it life. (The printed words of a play are about one third of a play; the tones and varying melodies of beautiful and artful speech are another third; and the business, gesture, and that great visible story, the expression of the speaking, and the dumb play of the silent actors, are another third.)

Belvidera's voice, full, sweet, rich, piercing, and melodious, and still in its vast compass true to the varying sentiment of all she uttered, seemed to impregnate every line with double meaning and treble beauty. Her author dilated into giant size and godlike beauty at the touch of that voice.

And when she was silent she still spoke to Alexander's eye, for her face was more eloquent than vulgar tongues are. Her dumb-play from the first to the last moment of the scene was in as high a key as her elocution. Had she not spoken one single word, still she would have written in the air by the side of Otway's syllables a great pictorial narrative, that filled all the chinks of his sketch with most rare and excellent colors of true flesh-tint, and made that sketch a picture.

Here was a new art for our poet; and as, by that just arrangement which pervades the universe, "acting" is the most triumphant of all the arts, to compensate it for being the most evanescent, what wonder that he thrilled beneath its magic, and worshipped its priestess?

He went home filled with a new sense of being, — all seemed cold, dark, and tame, until he could return and see this poetess-orator-witch and her enchantments once more.

In those days they varied the entertainments in London almost as they do in the provinces now; and Alexander, who went to the theatre six nights a week, saw Mrs. Oldfield's beauty and talent in many shapes. Her power of distinct personation was very great. Her Andromache, her Ismena, and Belvidera were all different beings. Also each of her tragic personations left upon the mind a type. One night young Oldworthy saw majesty, another tenderness, another fiery passion personified and embodied in a poetic creation.

But a fresh surprise was in store for him: the next week comedy happened to be in the ascendant; and Mrs. Oldfield, whose *entrée* in character was always the key-note of her personation, sprang upon the stage as Lady Townley, and in a moment the air seemed to fill with singing birds that chirped the pleasures of youth, beauty, and fashion, in notes that sparkled like diamonds, stars, and prisms. Her genuine gushing gayety warmed the coldest and cheered the forlornest heart. Nor was she less charming in the last act, where Lady Townley's good sense being at last alarmed, and her good heart touched, she bowed her saucy head, and begged her Lord's pardon, with tender, unaffected penitence. The tears stood thick in Alexander's eyes during that charming scene, where in a prose comedy the author has had the courage and the beauty to spread his wings and rise in a moment into verse with the rising sentiment.

To this succeeded Maria in "The Conjuror," and Indiana in what the good souls of that day were pleased to call the comedy of "The Conscious Lovers," in the course of which comedy Indiana made Alexander weep more constantly, continuously, and copiously than in all the tragedies of the epoch he had as yet witnessed.

So now Alexander Oldworthy lived for the stage; and, as the pearl is the disease of the oyster, so this Siren became Alexander's disease. The enthusiast lost his hold of real life. Real life became to him an *interlude*, and soon that followed which was to be expected: the poor novice, who had begun by adoring the artist, ended by loving the woman, and he loved her like a novice and a poet; he looked into his own heart, confounded it with hers, and clothed her with every heroic quality. He believed her as great in mind and as good in heart, as she was lovely in person, and he would have given poems to be permitted to kiss her dress, or to lay his neck for a moment under her foot. Burning to attract her attention, yet too humble and timid to make an open attempt, he had at last recourse to his own art. Every day he wrote verses upon her, and sent them to her house. Every night after the play he watched at the stage door for a glimpse of her as she came out of the theatre to her carriage, and, being lighter of foot than the carriage-horses of his century, he generally managed to catch another glimpse

of her as she stepped from her carriage into her own house.

But all this led to no results, and Alexander's heart was often very cold and sick. Whilst he sat at the play he was in Elysium; but when, after seeing this divinity vanish, he returned to his lodgings and looked at his attachment by the light of one candle, despondency fell like a weight of ice upon him, and he was miserable till he had written her some verses. The verses writ, he was miserable till play-time.

One night he stood as usual at the stage door after the performance, watching for Mrs. Oldfield, who, in a general way, was accompanied by her cousin Susan. This night, however, she was alone; and, having seen her enter her chariot, Alexander was about to start for her house to see her get down from it, when suddenly another carriage came into contact with Mrs. Oldfield's. The collision was violent, and Mrs. Oldfield screamed with unaffected terror, at which scream Alexander sprang to the horses of the other carriage, and, seizing one of them just above the curb, drew him violently back. To his surprise, instead of co-operating with him, the adverse coachman whipped both his horses, and, whether by accident or design, the lash fell twice on Alexander. John never made a worse investment of whip-cord. The young man drew himself back upon the pavement, and sprang with a single bound upon the near horse's quarters: from thence to the coach-box. Contemporaneously with his arrival there, he knocked the coachman out of his seat on to the roof of his carriage, and then seizing his whip, broke it in one moment into a stick, and belabored the prostrate charioteer till the blood poured from him in torrents. Then, springing to the ground with one bound, he turned the horses' heads, belabored them with the mutilated whip, and off they trotted gently home.

Alexander ran to Mrs. Oldfield's carriage window, his cheeks burning, his eyes blazing. "They are gone, madam," said he, with rough timidity. The actress looked at him, and smiled on him, and said, "So I see, sir, and I am much obleeged to you." She was then about to draw back to her corner, but suddenly she reflected, and, half beckoning Alexander, who had drawn back, she said, "My dear, learn for me whose carriage that was." Alexander turned to gain the information, but it was volunteered by one of the by-standers.

"It is the Duchess of Tadcaster's, Mrs. Oldfield."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Oldfield, "the little beast!" (this polite phrase she uttered with a most majestic force of sovereign contempt); "thank you, sir; bid Robert drive me home, my child" (this to Alexander); on which a by-stander sang out, "You are to drive home, Robert, — Buckingham Gate, the corner house."

At this sally Mrs. Oldfield smiled with perfect composure, but did not look at the speaker. As the carriage moved, she leaned gently forward, and kissed her hand like a queen to Alexander, then nestled into her corner and went to sleep.

Alexander did nothing of the sort that night. He went home on wings. He could not go in. He walked up and down before his door three hours, before he could go to so vulgar a thing as bed. As a lover will read over fifty times six lines of love from the beloved hand, so Alexander acted over and over the little scene of this night, and dwelt on every tone, word, look, and gesture of the great creature who had at last spoken to him, smiled on him, thanked him. O how happy he was! he could hardly realize his bliss. "My dear," — but had not his ears deceived him, — had she really called him "my dear," and what was he to understand by so unexpected an address? was it on account of the service he had just done her, or might he venture to hope she had noticed his face in the theatre, sitting, as he always did, at one place,

at the side of the second row of the pit? but no! he rejected that as impossible. Whatever she meant by it, his blood was at her service as well as his heart. He blessed her with tears in his eyes for using such heavenly words to him in any sense, — "my dear," "my child." He framed these words in his heart.

Alas! he little thought that "my dear" meant literally nothing; he was not aware that calling every living creature "my dear" is one of the nasty little tricks of the stage, — like their swearing without anger, and their shovelling snuff into the nose without intermission, in the innocent hope of making every sentence intellectual, by a dirty thing done mechanically, and not intellectually. As for "my child," that was better, — that was at least a trick of the lady's own, partly caught from her French acquaintances.

For some days Alexander was in heaven. He fell upon his tragedy, he altered it by the light the stage had given him; above all, he heightened and improved the heroine, he touched her, and retouched her with the colors of Oldfield, — and this done, with trembling hands he wrapped it in brown paper, addressed it, and left it at her own house, and no sooner had Susan's hand touched it than he fled like a guilty thing.

You see it was his first love, — and she he loved seemed more than mortal to him.

And now came a reaction. Days and days rolled by, and no more adventures came, no means of making acquaintance with one so high above his reach.

He was still at the stage door, but she did not seem to recognize him, and he dared not recall himself to her recollection. His organization was delicate, — he began to fret and lose his sleep, and at last his pallor and listlessness attracted the not very keen eye of Timothy Bateman. Mr. Bateman asked him twenty times if anything was the matter, — twenty times he answered, No! At last good, worthy, commonplace Bateman, after dinner and deep thought, said one day, "Alexander, I've found out what it is." Alexander started.

"Money melts in London, yours is gone quicker than you thought it would, — my poor lad, don't you fret. I've got £20 to spare, here 'tis. Your father will never know. I've been young as well as you." Alexander grasped the good old fellow's hand and pressed it to his heart. He never looked at the note, but he looked half tenderly, half wildly into the old man's eyes.

Bateman read this look aright. "Ay, out with it, young man," he cried, "never keep a grief locked up in your heart, whilst you have a friend that will listen to it; that is an old man's advice."

On this poor Alexander's story gushed forth. He told Bateman the facts I have told you, only his soul, and all the feelings he had gone through, gushed from his heart of hearts. They sat till one in the morning, and often as the young heart laid bare its enthusiasm, its youth, its anguish, the dry old lawyer found out there was a soft bit left in his own, that sent the woman to the door of his eyes; for Alexander told his story differently, and I think on the whole better than I do. I will just indicate *one* difference between us two as narrators, — he told it like blood and fire, I tell it like criticism and ice, and be hanged to me.

Perhaps, had Alexander told the tale as I do, Bateman, man of the world, would have sneered at him, or sternly advised him to quit this folly and whim; but as it was, Bateman was touched, and mingled pity with good, gentle, but firm advice, and poor Alexander was grateful. The poet revered the commonplace good man, as a poet ought, and humbly prayed him to save him by his wisdom. He owned that he was mad; that he was indulging a hopeless passion; that he knew the great trage-

dian, courted by the noble and rich of the land, would never condescend even to an acquaintance with him. And bursting into a passion of tears, "O good Mr. Bateman!" cried he, "the most unfortunate hour of my life was that in which I first saw her, for she will be my death, for she will never permit me to live for her, and without her life is intolerable to me."

This last feature decided Timothy Bateman; the next morning he wrote to Nathan Oldworthy a full account of all. "Come up and take him home again, for Heaven's sake."

It fell like a thunderbolt on the poor father, but he moved promptly; in two hours he was on the road to London.

Arrived there, he straight invaded Alexander. The poet, luckily for himself, was not at home. He then went to Bateman: he was in a towering passion.

The old Puritanical leaven was scotched, but not killed, in Coventry.

In a general way, Nathan looked on love as no worse than one of the Evil One's many snares, to divert youth from law, — but love of an actress! If you had asked Coventry whether the Play-House or the Public-House ruins the manners, morality, and intellect of England, Coventry was capable of answering, "The Play-House." He raged against the fool and the jade, as he succinctly, and not inaptly, described a dramatic poet and an actress.

His friend endeavored to stop the current of his wrath, in vain; the attempt only diverted its larger current from Alexander to the Siren who had fascinated him. In vain Bateman assured him that affairs had proceeded to no length between the parties; the other snubbed him, called him a fool, said he knew nothing of the world, and assured him that, if anything came of it, she should have nothing from the Oldworthys but thirty pence per week, the parish allowance (Nathan's ideas of love were as primitive as Alexander's were poetic), and lastly, bouncing up, he announced that he was going to see the hussy, and force her to give up her Delilah designs.

At this poor Bateman was in dismay; he represented to this mad bull that Mrs. Oldfield was "on the windy side of the law," that there were no proofs she had done anything more than every woman would do if she was clever enough, viz. turn every man's head; he next reminded him of her importance, and implored him at least to be prudent. "My dear friend," said he, "there are at least a score of gentlemen in this town, who would pass their swords through an old attorney, as they would through a mad dog, only to have a smile or a compliment from this lady."

This last argument was ill chosen. The old Puritan was game to the backbone; he flung Mrs. Oldfield's champions a grim grin of defiance, and marched out to invade that lady, and save his offspring.

Now, the said Mrs. Oldfield, wishing to be very quiet, because she was preparing to play for the championship of the stage, and was studying Statira, had given her footman orders to admit no living soul, upon any pretence.

Oldworthy, who had heard in Coventry that people in London are always at home if their servants say they are out, pushed past the man; the man followed him remonstrating. When they reached the antechamber, he thought it was time to do more, so he laid his hand on the intruder's collar; — then ensued a short but very brisk scuffle; the ladies heard, to their dismay, a sound as of a footman falling from the top to the bottom of a staircase; and the next moment, in jackboots, splashed with travel, an immense hat of a fashion long gone by, his dark cheek flushed with anger, and his eyes shooting sombre lightning from under their thick brows, Nathan Oldworthy strode like wildfire into the room.

Susan screamed, and Anne turned pale, but, recovering herself, she said, with a wonderful show of spirit, "How dare you intrude on me? — Keep close to me, stupid!" was her trembling aside to Susan.

"I 'm used to enter people's houses, whether they will or not," was the gruff reply.

"Your business, sir?" said Mrs. Oldfield, with affected calmness.

"It is not fit for that child to hear," was the answer.

Anne Oldfield was wonderfully intelligent, and even in this remark she saw the man, if a barbarian, was not a ruffian at bottom. She looked towards Susan.

Susan, interpreting her look, declined to leave her alone "with, with —"

"A brute, I suppose," said Nathan, coarsely.

The artist measured the man with her eye.

"He who feels himself a brute is on the way to be a man," said she, with genuine dignity; so saying, she dismissed Susan with a gesture.

"You are the play-acting woman, are n't you?" said he.

"I am the tragedian, sir," replied she, "whose time is precious."

"I 'll lose no time, — I 'm an attorney, — the first in Coventry. I 'm Nathan Oldworthy. My son's education has been given him under my own eye, — I taught him the customs of the conntry, and the civil law. He is to be a sergeant-at-law, and a sergeant-at-law he shall be —"

"I consent, for one," said Oldfield, demurely.

"And then we can play into one another's hands, as should be."

"I have no opposition to offer to this pretty little scheme of the Old Somethings, — father and son."

"Oldworthys! no opposition! when he has n't been once to Westminster, and every night to the playhouse."

"Oh!" said the lady, "I see! the old story."

"The very day the poor boy came here," resumed Nathan, "there was a tragedy play; so, because a woman sighed and burned for sport, the fool goes home and sighs and burns in earnest, can't eat his victuals, flings away his prospects, and thinks of nothing but this Nance Oldfield."

He uttered this appellation with rough contempt; and had the actress been a little one, this descent to Nance Oldfield would have mortified or enraged her. But its effect on the great Oldfield was different, and somewhat singular; she opened her lovely eyes on him. "Nance Oldfield!" cried she; "O sir! nobody has called me that name since I left my little native town."

"Have n't they, though?" said the rough customer, more gently, responding to her heavenly tones, rather than to the sentiment, which he in no degree comprehended.

"No!" said Oldfield, with an ill-used Æolian-harp note.

Here the attorney began to suspect she was diverting him from the point, and with a curl of the lip, and a fine masculine contempt for all subterfuges not on sheepskin, — "You had better say you do not know all this," cried he.

"Not I," was the reply. "My good sir, your son has left you to confide to me the secret of his attachment: you have discharged the commission, Sir Pandarus of Troy," added she, with a world of malicious fun in her jewel-like eye.

"Nathan Oldworthy of Coventry, I tell ye!" put in the angry sire.

"And it is now my duty to put some questions to you," resumed the actress. "Is your son handsome?" said she, in a sly half-whisper.

"Is not he?" answered gaunt simplicity, "and well built too, — he is like me, they say."

"There is a point on which I am very particular. Has he nice teeth? — upon your honor, now."

"White as milk, ma'am; and a

smile that warms your heart up; fresh color; there 's not such a lad in Coventry." Here the old boy caught sight of a certain poetical epistle, which, if you remember, was in Mrs. Oldfield's hands.

"And pray, madam," said he, with smooth craft, "does Alexander Oldworthy never write to you?"

"Never!" was her answer.

"She says never!" thundered Nathan, "and there is his letter in her very hand, — a superb handwriting; what a waste of talent to write to you with it, instead of engrossing; what does the fool say?" and he snatched the letter rudely from her, and read out poor Alexander, with the lungs of a Stentor.

Gracious me! if I was puzzled to show the reader how Susan read the Mannering prose, how on earth shall I make him hear and see Oldworthy Père read Oldworthy Fils, his rhymes; but I will attempt a faint adumbration, wherein, Glorious Apollo! from on high befriend us!

"My soul hangs trembling," — (full stop.) "On that magic voice, grieves with your woe," — (full stop.) "Exults when you rejoice. A golden chain," — (Here he cast a look of perplexity.) "I feel but cannot see," — (here he began to suspect Alexander of insanity.) "Binds earth to Heaven," — (of impiety, ditto.) "It ties my heart *to* thee like a sunflower." And now the reader wore the ill-used look of one who had been betrayed into a labyrinth of unmeaning syllables; but at this juncture, thanks to his sire, Alexander Oldworthy began to excite Mrs. Oldfield's interest.

"And that poetry is his?" said the actress.

"Poetry? no! How could my son write poetry? I'll be hanged if 't is n't though, for all the lines begin with a capital letter."

Oldfield took the paper from him. "Listen," said she, and, with a heavenly cadence and expression, she spoke the lines thus: —

"My soul hangs trembling on that magic voice,
Grieves with your woe, exults when you rejoice;
A golden chain I feel, but cannot see,
Binds earth to Heaven, — it ties my heart to thee,
Like a sunflower, etc., etc.

"What do you call that, eh?"

"Why, honey dropping from the comb," said the astounded lawyer, to whom the art of speech was entirely unknown, until that moment, as it is to millions of the human race. "It is honey dropping from the comb," repeated Nathan. "I see, he has been and bought it ready made, and it has cost him a pretty penny, no doubt. So now his money 's going to the dogs, too."

"And these sentiments, these accents of poetry and truth, that have reached my heart, this daily homage, that would flatter a queen, do I owe it to your son? O sir!"

"Good gracious heavens!" roared the terrified father; "don't *you* go and fall in love with *him;* and, now I think on 't, that is what *I* have been working for ever since I came here. Cut it short. I came for my son, and I will have him back, if you please. Where is he?"

"How can I know?" said the lady, pettishly.

"Why, he follows you everywhere."

"Except here, where he never will follow me, unless his father teaches him housebreaking under the head of civil law."

At this sudden thrust, Oldworthy blushed. "Well, ma'am!" stammered he, "I was a little precipitate; but, my good lady, pray tell me, when did you last see him?"

"I never saw him at all, which I regret," added she, satirically; "because you say he resembles his father." Nathan was a particularly ugly dog.

"She is very polite," thought Nathan. "But," objected he, civilly, "you must have learned from his letters."

"That they are not signed!" said she, handing the poetical epistle to him, with great significance.

Mr. Nathan Oldworthy began now to doubt whether he was *sur le bon terrain* in his present proceedings; and the error in which he had detected himself made him suddenly suspect his judgment and general report on another head. "What an extraordinary thing!" said he, bluntly. "Perhaps you are an honest woman after all, ma'am!"

"Sir!" said Oldfield, with a most tragic air.

"I ask your pardon, ma'am! I ask your pardon!" cried the other, terrified by the royal pronunciation of this monosyllable. "Country manners, ma'am! that is all! We do speak so straightforward down in Coventry."

"Yes! but if you speak so straightforward here, you will be sent to Coventry."

"I'll take care not, madam! I'll take great care not!" said the other, hastily. Then he paused, — a light rose gradually to his eyes. "Sent to Coventry! ha! haw! ho! But, madam, this love will be his ruin: it will rob him of his profession, which he detests, and of a rich heiress whom he can't abide! Since I came here, I think better of play-actors; but, consider, madam, we don't like our blood to come down in the world!"

"It *would* be cruel to lower an attorney," replied the play-actress, looking him demurely in the face.

"You are considerate, madam!" replied he, gratefully. He added, with manly compunction, "More so, I fear, than I have deserved."

"Mais! il me désarme cet homme!" cried the sprightly Oldfield, ready to scream with laughter.

"Are you speaking to me, ma'am?" said Nathan, severely.

"No, that was an 'aside.' Go on, my good soul!"

"Then forgive the trouble, the agitation, of a father: his career, his happiness, is in danger."

"Now, why did you not begin with that? it would have saved your time and mine. Favor me with your attention, sir, for a moment," said the fine lady, with grave courtesy.

"I will, madam," said the other, respectfully.

"Mr. Oldworthy, first you are to observe, that I have, by the constitutions of these realms, as much right to fall in love with your son, or even with yourself, as he or you have to do with me."

"So you have, I never thought of that; but don't ye do it, for Heaven's sake, if 't is n't done already."

"But I should have been inclined, even before your arrival, to waive that right, out of regard for my own interest and reputation, especially the former: and now you have won my heart, and I enter into your feelings, and place myself at your service —"

"You are very good, madam! Now, why do they go and run play-actors down so?"

"You are aware, sir, that we play-actors have not an idea of our own in our skulls: our art is to execute beautifully the ideas of those who think: now, you are a man of business; you will therefore be pleased to give me your instructions, and you shall see those instructions executed better than they are down in Coventry. You want me to prevent your son from loving me! I consent. Tell me how to do it."

"Madam!" said Nathan; "you have put your finger on the very point! What a lawyer you would have made! Madam, I thank you! Very well, then you must — but, no, that will make him worse, perhaps. And again, you can't leave off playing, can you? because that is your business you know, — dear me! Ah! I'll tell you how to bring it about. Let me see — no! — yes! — no! drat it!"

"Your instructions are not sufficiently clear, sir!" suggested Mrs. Oldfield.

"Well, madam! it is not so easy

as I thought, and I don't see what instructions I am to give you, until — until — "

"Until I tell you what to tell me, — that's fair. Well, give me a day to think. I am so busy now. I must play my best to-night!"

"But he'll be there," said Nathan, in dismay; "you'll play your best: you'll burn him to a cinder. I'll go to him." He ran to the window, informing his companion that, for the first time in his life, he was going to take a coach. But he had no sooner arrived at the window, than he made a sudden point, and beckoned the lady to him, without removing his eyes from some object on which he glared down, with a most singular expression of countenance. She came to his side. He directed her eyes to the object. "Look there, ma'am! look there!" She peeped, and, standing by a hosier's shop, at the corner of the street, she descried a young man, engaged as follows: His hat was in his hand, and on the hat was a little piece of paper. He was alternately writing on this, and looking upward for inspiration.

"Is that he?" whispered Mrs. Oldfield.

"Yes! that's your man, — bareheaded, looking up into the sky, and does n't see how it rains."

"But he's very handsome, Mr. Oldworthy, and you said he was like — hem! yes, he is very handsome."

"Is n't he, madam!"

He was handsome, — his rich chestnut curls flowed down his neck in masses; his face was oval; his eyes full of color and sentiment; and in him the purple light of youth was brightened by the electric light of expression and charming sensibility.

The strangely assorted pair in our scene held on by one another, the better to inspect the young poet, who little thought what a pair of critics were in store for him.

"What a bright, intelligent look the silly goose has!" said the actress.

"Has n't he? the dear — idiot!" said the parent.

"Is he waiting for you, sir?" said she, with affected simplicity.

"No," replied he, with zeal; "it's you he is waiting for."

Alexander began to walk slowly past the house, looking up to heaven every now and then for inspiration, and then looking down and scribbling a bit, like a hen drinking, you know; and, thus occupied, he stalked to and fro, passing and repassing beneath the criticising eyes, — at sight of which pageant a father's fingers began to work, and, "Madam," said he, with a calmness too marked to be genuine, "do let me fling one little — chair at his silly head."

"No, indeed."

"A pillow, then?"

"O Lud, no! — you don't know these boys, sir! he would take that as an overture of affection from the house. Stay: will you obey me, or will you not?"

"Of course I will! — how can I help?" and he grinned with horrible amiability.

"Then I will cure your son."

"You will, you promise me?"

"On the honor of — a play-actor!" and she offered him, with a world of grace, the loveliest hand going at that era.

"Of an angel, I think," said the subjugated barbarian.

Mrs. Oldfield then gave him a short sketch of the idea that had occurred to her. "Your son, sir," said she, "is in love by the road of imagination and taste, — he has seen upon the stage a being more like a poet's dream than any young woman down in Coventry, — and he overrates her; I will contrive that in ten minutes he shall underrate her. I will also find means to wound his vanity, which is inordinate in all his sex, and gigantic in the versifying part of it; and then, sir, I promise you that your son's love, so fresh, so fiery, so lofty, so humble, will either turn to hatred or contempt, or else quietly evap-

orate like a mist, and vanish like a morning dream. Ah!" — (and she could not help sighing a little).

Susan was then called, and directed to show Mr. Nathan Oldworthy out the back way, that he might avoid the encounter of his son. The said Nathan, accordingly, marched slap away, in four great strides; but the next moment the door burst open, and he returned in four more, — he took up a position opposite his fair entertainer, and, with much gravity, executed a solemn, but marvellously grotesque bow, intended to express gratitude and civility; this done, he recovered body, and strode away again, slap-dash.

Spirits like Alexander's are greatly depressed and greatly elevated without proportionate change in the external causes of joy and grief. It is theirs to view the same set of facts, rose-color one day, lurid another. Two days ago, Alexander had been in despondence; to-day hope was in the ascendant, and his destiny appeared to him all bathed in sunshine. He was rich in indistinct but gay hopes; these hopes had whispered to him that, after all, an alliance between a dramatic poet and a tragedian was a natural one, — that perhaps, on reflection, she he loved might not think it so very imprudent. He felt convinced she had read "Berenice," — she would see the alterations in the heroine's part, and that love had dictated them. She would find there was one being that comprehended her. That, and his verses, would surely plead his cause. Then he loved her so, — who could love her as he did? Some day she would feel that no heart could love her so, — and then he would say to her, "I am truth and nature, — you are beauty and music; united, we should conquer the world, and be the world to one another!" Poor boy!

He was walking and dreaming thus beneath her window, when his ear caught the sound of that window opening; he instantly cowered against the wall, hoping this happy day to see the form he loved, himself unseen, when, to his immeasurable surprise, a beautiful girl put her head out of the window, and called softly to him. He took no notice, because it was inaudible. She had to repeat the call before he could realize his good fortune; the signal, however, was unmistakable, and soon after the door opened, and there was pretty Susan, blushing. Alexander ran to her, she opened the door wider, he entered, believing in magic for the first time. Susan took him up stairs, — he said nothing, — he could not, — she did not speak, because she thought he ought to. At last they reached a richly furnished room, where Statira's dress lay upon a chair, and a theatrical diadem upon a table. Alexander's heart leaped at sight of these; he knew, then, where he was; he turned hot and cold, and trembled violently. The first word Susan said did not calm his agitation. "There is a lady here," said she, "who has something to say to you."

Now it must be remembered that Susan considered Alexander her undoubted property; and when she was told to introduce him, she could not help thinking how kind it was of her cousin to take her part, and bring to the point a young gentleman who, charming in other respects, appeared to her sadly deficient in audacity. "Sit down," said Susan, smiling.

O no! he could not sit down here! Susan pitied his timidity and his discomposure; and, to put both him and herself out of pain the sooner, she left him and went to announce his presence to her cousin and guardian, as she now considered her.

Alexander was left alone, to all appearance; in reality, he was in a crowd, — a crowd of "thick-coming fancies." He was to breathe the same air as she, to be by her side, whom the world adored at a distance; he was to see her burst on him like

the sun, and to feel more strongly than ever how far his verse fell short of the goddess who inspired it; he half wished to retreat from his too great happiness. Suddenly a rustle in the apartment awakened him from his rich revery; he looked up, and there was a lady with her eyes fixed on him.

The lady had on what might, without politeness, but with truth, be called a dressing-gown; it was ostentatiously large everywhere, especially at the waist. The lady's hair, or what seemed her hair, was rough, and ill done up, and a great cap of flaunty design surmounted her head. On her feet were old slippers.

"Good day, sir!" said she, dryly.

Alexander bowed. "Madam, I wait Mrs. Oldfield."

"*Tête-à-tête* with your muse." Alexander's poetical works were in her hand.

"She is my muse, madam!" replied he; "she alone. Are you not proud of her, madam? for I see by your likeness that you are some relation."

The lady burst out laughing. "That's a compliment to my theatrical talent; I am the party."

"You Mrs. Oldfield! the great Mrs. Oldfield!"

"Why not? What, you come from the country, I suppose, and think we are to be always on the stilts, when we are not paid for it. You look as if you were afraid of me."

"O no, madam; and, as you say, it shows how great your talent is."

"You want to speak to me, my lad."

Alexander blushed to the temples. "Yes, madam!" faltered he, "you have divined my ambition. I have been presumptuous, — but I saw you on the tragic scene, — the admiration you inspired, — I fear I have importuned you, — but my hope, my irresistible desire — "

"There, I know what you mean," said she, with an affectation of vulgar good nature, "you want an order for the pit?"

"I want an order for the pit?" gasped Alexander, faintly.

"Well, ain't I going to give you one," answered she, as sharp as a needle; "but mind, you must — " here she imitated vehement applause.

"O madam! I need no such injunction," cried Alexander; "each of your achievements on the stage seems to be greater than the last." Then, trembling, blushing, and eloquent as fire, he poured out his admiration of her, and her great art: "The others are all puppets, played by rule around you, the queen of speech and poetry; your pathos is so true, your sensibility so profound; yours are real tears; you lead our sorrow in person; you fuse your soul into those great characters, and art becomes nature. You are the thing you seem, and it is plain each lofty emotion passes through that princely heart on its way to those golden lips!"

Oldfield, with all her self-command, could not quite resist the eloquence of the heart and brain. She, too, now blushed a little, and her lovely bosom heaved slowly, but high, as the poet poured the music of his praise into her ears; then she stole a look at him from under her long lashes, and sipped his beauty and his freshness. She could not help looking at this forbidden fruit. As she looked, she did feel how hard, how cruel it was, that she was not to be allowed to play with this young, fresh heart; to see it throb with hopes and fears, and love, jealousy, anguish, joy, and finally to break it, and fling the pieces to the Devil; but she was a singular character, — she was the concentrated essence of female in all points, except one: she was a woman of her word, or, as some brutes would say, no woman at all in matters of good faith. She stood pledged to the attorney, and therefore, recovering herself, she took up Alexander thus: —

"No, thank you, emotions pass

through my — what's the name — well, you *are* green — you don't come from the country — you are from Wales. I must enlighten you; sit down, sit down, I tell you. The tears my boy, are as real as the rest, — as the sky, and that's pasteboard, — as the sun, and he is three candles, smirking upon all nature, which is canvas, — they are as real as ourselves, the tragedy queens, with our cries, our sighs, and our sobs, all measured out to us by the five-foot rule. Reality, young gentleman, *that* begins when the curtain falls, — and we wipe off our profound sensibility along with our rouge, our whiting, and our beauty spots."

"Impossible!" cried the poet; "those tears, those dew-drops on the tree of poetry!"

He was requested not to make her "die of laughing" with his tears; his common sense was appealed to. "Now, my good soul, if I was to vex myself night after night for Clytemnestra and Co., don't you see that I should not hold together long? No, thank you! I've got 'Nance Oldfield' to take care of, and what's Hecuba to her? For my part," continued this frank lady, "I don't understand half the authors give us to say."

"O yes, you do! you write upon our eyes and ears more than half ot all the author gains credit for, — the noblest sentiments gain more from your tongue than the pen, great as it is, could ever fling upon paper, — I am unworthy to be your companion!"

"Nonsense! do you really think I am like those black parrots of tragedy? — fine company I should be! — he, he! No! we are like other women, you can court us without getting a dagger stuck into you." She then informed him that the representatives of Desdemona, Belvidera, Cordelia, and Virgin Purity in general had all as many beaux as they could lay their hands on, — that she had twenty at the present moment: that he could join that small but select band, if he chose, secure of this, that, whether a fortunate or unfortunate lover, there would be companions of his fate. Then, suddenly interrupting her disclosures, she offered him a snuff-box, and said dryly, "D' ye snuff?"

Alexander's eye dilated with horror. She observed him, and explained, "There's no doing without it, in our business, we get so tired!" Here she yawned as only actresses yawn, — like one going out of the world in four pieces. "We get so tired of the whole concern; this is the real source of our inspiration," said she, taking a pinch, "or how should we ever rise to the poet's level, and launch all those awful execrations they love so? as, for instance, — Ackishoo! — God bless you!"

Alexander groaned aloud.

"Poor boy!" thought his tormentor, "how he takes it to heart!"

"Why, ma'am, a fall from heaven to earth is a considerable descent."

"You look pale, my child," resumed the tormentor. "No breakfast, perhaps. I'd offer you some in a minute, but the fact is, you must forgive me; but I look to every penny; when the rainy day comes I shall be ready"; and she brought both hands down upon her knees, in a way the imitated vulgarity of which would have made any one scream with laughter that had seen her game; but it was all genuine to our poor poet, and crushed him.

Having opened this vein of self-depreciation, she proceeded to work it. She poked him with one finger, and, looking slyly with half-shut eye at him, she announced herself the authoress of some very curious calculations, the object of which was to discover, by comparing the week's salary with the lines in the night's performance, the exact value of poetical passages, generally supposed to be invaluable. "Listen," said she: —

"'Come! come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here!'

They are just worth tenpence!"

Alexander, who had been raised by the poetry, was depressed greatly by its arithmetic.

She recommenced: —

"That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, Hold! hold! — Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!"

Making the point on "Great Glamis," at Macbeth's entrance, not on "Hold," which is done nowadays, and is too cruel silly.

"Ah! you are yourself again," cried the poet.

"Yes; I am myself again!" was the dry answer: "those bring me in 2*s*. 8*d*. every time."

And this was the being he had adored! He had invested this creature with his own prismatic hues, and taken her for a rainbow.

Mrs. Oldfield told afterwards that she felt herself cutting his heart away from her at every sentence. "But it was to be done," she continued. "So now you know my trade, tell me what is yours?"

"One I used to despise, — an advocate."

"Ah! a little long robe; they are actors, too, only bad ones; but tell me," said she, with a silly coquettish manner, borrowed from the comedy of the day, "what do you want of me? You have not followed me so perseveringly for nothing! Speak, what have you to tell me?"

Alexander blushed; he had no longer the stimulus to tell her all he had felt and hoped; he hesitated and stammered; at last he bethought him of his tragedy; so he said: "I sent you a tragedy, madam!"

"What, do they do that in Warwickshire?"

"Yes, madam! I composed it by stealth in my father's office."

Oldfield smiled.

Alexander continued: "It is called, from the heroine of the play, Berenice!"

"Berenice!" cried the actress, with a start.

Now this tragedy had pleased Mrs. Oldfield more than any manuscript she had seen these three years; but, above all, the part of "Berenice" had charmed her; it fitted her like a glove, as she poetically expressed herself; it was written in Alexander's copperplate hand, so she had not identified it with the author of her diurnal verses.

"Berenice! is it possible?"

"A queen, madam, who, captured by the Romans — "

"What, sir! you the author of that work?" said she, with sudden respect.

"Favor me with your opinion," said the sanguine poet.

Tremble, Nathan, you had only her womanly weakness to dread hitherto; but now the jade's interest is against you. Strange to say, her promise carried the day; she was true as steel to Nathan, and remorseless as steel to Alexander. She saw at once that no middle course was now tenable; so she turned on the poor poet, not without secret regret, and, with a voice of ice, she said: "The town is tired of Romans, my good sir, you had better go into Tartary; besides," added she, jumping at the commonplaces of dramatic censure, "your fable does not march, your language wants fire; let me give you a word of advice, or rather a line of advice, 'Plead, Alexander, plead, and rhyme no more!'" She then added hastily, in a very different tone and manner, "Forgive me, my poor child, you will make more money, and be more respected."

The reason of this rapid change of manner was this: when we have given dreadful pain, more pain than we calculated on, and see it, we are apt to try and qualify it with a little weak, empty good-nature. Now at her verdict, and her witty line, Alexander had turned literally as pale as ashes! The drop of oil she poured on the deadly wounds she had given

was no comfort to him; he rose, he tried to speak to her, but his lip trembled so violently he could not articulate; at last he gasped out: "Thank you for undeceiving me; you have taught me your own v—value; and m—mine, forgive me, the time I have made you waste upon a d—dunce." And then, in spite of all he could do, the tears forced themselves through the poor boy's eyes, and, casting one look of shame and half-reproach upon her, he put his hand to his brow, and went disconsolately from the room, and out of the house.

Poor fellow! she had made him ten years older than when, ten minutes before, he entered that room, all faith, and poetry, and hope, and love.

Slowly and disconsolately, he dragged his heavy steps and heavy heart home. His father followed, and entered his small apartment without ceremony. Nathan found his son sitting with his eyes fixed on the ground; in a few abrupt words he told him he knew all about his amorous folly, and had come up to cure it.

"It is cured," said Alexander; "she has cured me herself."

"Then she is an honest woman," cried Nathan. "So now, since that nonsense is over, take my arm and we will go down to Westminster."

"Yes, father."

They went to Westminster; they entered a court of law, and were so fortunate as to hear an interesting trial. Counsel for the plaintiff was just opening a *crim. con.* case.

The advocate dwelt upon the sacred feelings outraged by the seducer, on the irremediable gap that had been made in a house and in a human heart; the pitiable doubt that had been cast over those sacred parental affections, which were all that now remained to the bereaved husband. He painted the empty chamber, the vacant place by the hearth, and the father dagger-struck by little voices lisping, "Papa, where is mamma gone?" and all that sort of thing. His speech was rich in topic and point, and as for emphasis, it was all emphasis. He concluded in this wise: "Such injuries as these can never be compensated by money; it is ridiculous to talk of money where a man has been laid desolate, and therefore I hope, gentlemen of the jury, you will give my unfortunate client three thousand pounds damages at the very least."

At each point the orator made, Nathan nudged Alexander, as if to say, "That is how you must do it some day."

As they returned homewards, Attorney asked Poet how he had been charmed by Mr. Eitherside's eloquence.

"Eloquence," said Alexander, waking from his revery. "I heard no eloquence."

"No eloquence! why, he worked the defendant like a man beating a carpet."

Nathan recapitulated Mr. Eitherside's points.

"Well, father," was the languid reply, "this shows me that people who would speak about the heart should speak from the heart. I heard something like a terrier dog barking, that is all I remember."

"A terrier dog! one of the first counsel in the land! But there, you come to your dinner. I won't be in a passion with you, if I can help, because — you'll be better after dinner."

Nathan's satisfaction at his son's sudden cure was soon damped. Alexander was not better after dinner: to be sure this might have been owing to his having eaten none; he could not eat, and never volunteered a word, only, when spoken to three times, he shook himself and answered with a visible effort, and then nestled into silence again. The next and following days matters were worse. Spite of all Nathan could do to move him, he sank into a cold, listless melancholy. About five o'clock

(play-time) he used to be very restless and nervous for a little while, and then relapse into stone. And now Nathan began to ask himself what the actress had done to his son during that short interview between them. He began greatly to doubt the wonderful cure, or rather to fear that the first poison had been attacked by a stronger, in the way of antidote, which had left his son in worse case than before.

Hitherto he had thought it wisest to avoid the subject, and silently expel the boy's folly by taking him and shaking him, and keeping him from thinking of it. But now one evening, as he looked at Alexander's pallid, listless countenance, his anxiety got the better of his plan, and he could not help facing the obnoxious topic.

After a vain attempt or two to interest the poet in other matters, he suddenly burst out: "What is the matter, Alexander? What has she done to you now?"

Alexander winced.

"Tell me, my boy," said Nathan, more gently.

Alexander *éclata*.

"She has deceived me. She has robbed my heart of all its wealth. O, I would rather have gone on believing her all that is great and good, though inaccessible to me! But to find my divinity a mean, heartless slattern. To find that I have poured all my treasures away forever upon an unworthy object. O father! I do not grieve so much that she is worthless, but that I thought her worthy. To me she was the jewel of the earth. I know her now for a vile counterfeit, and I have wasted my affections on this creature, and now I have none left for any worthy object; scarcely for my father. See my conduct to you all this week. Heaven forgive me, — and you forgive me, sir. I feel I am no son to you. I am lost! I am lost!"

"Alexander, don't be a fool," roared Nathan; "get up off your knees, or I'll kee—kee—kick you into the fi—fire!" gulped he; "that is right, — that's a dear boy: now tell me what has the poor lady done? I can't think she is such a very bad one."

"She has robbed herself and me of the tints with which I had invested her, and shown herself to me in her true colors."

"Why, you must n't tell me she paints her face without 't is with cold water."

"O no! not that, but off the stage she is a mean, vulgar, bad woman."

"I can't think that of her, Alexander."

"Father, I have no words to tell you her vulgarity, her avarice, her stupidity, — as for her beauty, it is all paint and artifice, father. I saw her this day se'night in her own house; she is vulgar, and dirty, and almost ugly."

"O you deceitful young rascal, you know she is beautiful as an angel!"

"Is n't she, sir! — ah! you have only seen her on the stage — "

"I see her on the stage! What, do you tell me I go to the playhouse! I never was in a playhouse in my life."

"Then how do you know she is beautiful? Where have you seen her, if not on the stage?"

Mr. Oldworthy senior hesitated. He did not choose his son to know he had visited the play-actress, and enlisted her in his cause.

Alexander saw his hesitation, and misinterpreted it ludicrously.

"Ah, father," cried he, "do not be ashamed of it."

"I am not, — ashamed of what?"

"Would I were worthy of all this affection!"

"What affection?"

"That you have for the unfortunate."

"I have no affection for the unfortunate; it 's always their own fault."

"If you know how I honor you for

this, you would not deny or be ashamed of it."

"Of what? Are we talking riddles?"

"Do not attempt to disguise what gives you a fresh title to my gratitude, — it was curiosity to see my destroyer drew you thither. Ah, it must have been the day before yesterday. I remember you disappeared after dinner. Well, father," continued Alexander, with a sad, sweet, melancholy accent, "you saw her play 'Monimia' that night, and having seen her you can forgive my infatuation."

"No! I can't forgive your infatuation, obstinate toad! that will tell me I have been to the playhouse, — to the Devil's own shop parlor, that is."

"You have seen her, — you call her beautiful, therefore it is clear you have seen her at the theatre, for at home she is anything but beautiful or an angel."

"Alexander, you will put me in a passion; but I won't be put in a passion." So saying, the old gentleman, who was in a passion, marched slap out of the house into the moonlight and cooled himself therein.

On his return he found his son sitting in a sort of collapse by the fire, and all his endeavors to draw him from brooding over his own misery proved unavailing. The next day he was worse, if possible; and when play-time had come and gone, and Nathan was in the middle of a long law-case that he was relating for his son's amusement, Alexander, who had not spoken for hours, quietly asked Nathan what he thought about suicide, and whether it was really a crime to die when hope was dead, and life withered forever. Nathan gave a short, severe answer to this query; but it troubled him.

He began to be frightened: he consulted Bateman. Bateman was equally puzzled; but at last the latter hit upon an idea. "Go to the actress again," said he; "it seems she can do anything with him. She made him love her, — she made him hate her; ask her to make him to do something between the two."

"Why, you old fool!" was the civil retort, "you are as mad as he is. No! she almost bewitched me, for as old as I am; and I won't go near her again."

But Alexander got worse and worse. He drooped like a tender flower. He had lost appetite and sleep; and without them the body soon gives way.

His grief was of the imagination. But the distinction muddleheads draw between real and imaginary griefs is imaginary. Whatever robs a human unit of rest, nourishment, and life, is as real to him as anything but eternity itself is real.

The old men saw a subtle disorder creeping over the young man. It was incomprehensible to them; and after ridiculing it awhile, they began to be more frightened at it than if they had comprehended it.

At last, one fine morning, a new phase presented itself. A great desire for solitude consumed our poor poet. All human beings were distasteful to him, and, his mind being in a diseased state, Nathan and Timothy bored him like red-hot gimlets, — the truth must be told. Well, this particular morning they would not let him alone, — and so he wanted just to be left in peace, — and partly from nervousness, partly from irritation, partly from misery, the poet lost all self-command, and, I am sorry to say, cursed and swore, and vowed he would kill himself, and called his friends his tormentors, and wept and raved and cursed the hour he was born. And at the end of this most unbecoming tirade he was for dashing out of the house; but his father caught him by the collar, and whirled him back into his room, and locked him into it. Alexander fell into a chair, and buried his face in his hands; presently he heard something that made him feel how selfish his grief had been. He heard a deep sigh just outside the

door, and then a heavy step went down the stair.

"Father!" cried he, "forgive me! O, forgive me!"

It was too late. All who give a parent pain repent; but how often it is too late!

The poor old man was gone, as unhappy as his son, and with more solid reason. He went into the street, without knowing what he should do or where he should go.

It happened at this moment that Bateman's advice came into his head. He was less disposed to scout it now.

"It can do no harm," thought he, "and I am quite at a loss. She has a good heart, I think, and at all events she seems to know how to work on him, and I don't. I'll risk it."

So, hanging his head, with no very good will, he slowly wended his way towards Mrs. Oldfield's house.

When Alexander left Mrs. Oldfield, that lady took off her vulgar cap and the old wig with which she had disguised her lovely head, and, throwing herself into a chair, laughed at the piece of comedy she had played off on our poor poet.

Her laugh, however, was not sincere; it soon died away into something more like a sigh.

The next morning there was no letter in verse, and she missed it. She had become used to them, and was vexed to think she had put an end to them. On returning from the theatre she looked from her carriage to see if he was standing as usual by the stage door. No, he was not there; no more letters, — no more Alexander. She felt sorry she had lost so genuine an admirer; and the moment the sense of his loss touched herself, she began to pity him, and think what a shame it was to deceive him so.

"I could have liked him better than all the rest," said she.

But this lady's profession is one unfavorable to the growth of regrets, or of affection for any object not in sight. She had to rehearse from ten till one, then to come home, then to lay out her clothes for the theatre, then to dine, then to study, then to go to the theatre, then to dress, then to act with all the intoxications of genius, light, multitude, and applause, then to undress, sup, etc.; and all this time she was constantly flattered and courted by dozens of beaux and wits. Had she been capable of a deep attachment, it could not have monopolized her as Alexander's did his. However, she did thus much for our poor poet; when she found she had succeeded in banishing him, she went into her tantrums, and snapped at and scratched everybody else that was kind to her. She also often invited Susan to speak of him, and after a while snubbed her and forbade the topic.

To-day, then, as Mrs. Oldfield sat studying "The Rival Queens," suddenly she heard a sob, and there was Susan, with the tears quietly and without effort streaming from her eyes, like the water running through a lockgate. Susan had just returned from a walk.

"What have you done?" whined Susan. "I have just met him, and he said to me, 'Ah, madam!' he always calls me madam, and he has lost his beautiful color, — he is miserable, — and I am miserable."

"Well!" snapped Anne, "and am I not miserable too! Why, Susan," cried she, for a glimmering of light burst on her, "surely you are not such a goose as to fancy yourself in love with my Alexander."

My Alexander, — good! She has declined him for herself, but she will not let you have him any the more for *that*, — other women!

"Your Alexander! No! I am too fond of my own! Here's your one's book"; and Susan thrust a duodecimo towards her cousin.

"My one's book," said Mrs. Oldfield, with a mystified air.

"Yes! Robert says it belongs to the young gentleman who saved you from the Duchess's carriage; he picked it up after the battle."

Mrs. Oldfield opened the book with

interest; judge her surprise when the first page discovered verses in Alexander's well-known hand: in the next page was a spirited drawing of Mrs. Oldfield as "Sophonisba"; under it was written, in gold letters, "Not one base word of Carthage on thy soul," — a line the actress used to speak with such majesty and fire that the audience always burst into a round of applause. And so on, upon every page, poetry or picture. The verses were more tender than those he had sent her by letter. The book was his secret heart!

It was Alexander, then, who had saved her, — his love surrounded her. And how had all his devotion been repaid? She became restless, — bit her lips; the book she held became a book of mist, and she said to Susan, in bitter accents: "They had better not let the poor boy come near me again, or they will find I am a woman, in spite of my nasty blank verse and bombast. Oh! oh! oh!" and the tragedian whimpered a little, much as a housemaid whimpers; it was not at all like the "real tears" that had so affected Alexander.

On the fly-leaf of this little book was written: "Alexander Oldworthy! Should I die, — and I think I shall not live, for my love consumes me, — I pray some good Christian to take this book to the great Mrs. Oldfield; it will tell her what I shall never dare to tell her: and if departed spirits are permitted to watch those they have loved, it is for her sake I shall revisit this earth, which, but for her, I should leave without regret."

"I am a miserable woman!" cried the dealer in fictitious grief. "*This is love!* I never was loved before, and mine must be the hand to stab him; they make me turn his goddess to a slut, — his love to contempt; and I do it, madwoman that I am! For what? to rob myself of the solace Heaven had sent to my vacant heart, — of the only real treasure the earth contains"; and she burst into a passion of tears.

At this Susan's dried themselves; the grief of the greater mind swallowed up her puny sorrow, as the river absorbs the brook that joins it. Anne frightened her, and at last she stole from the room in dismay. Her absence, however, was short; she returned in about ten minutes, and announced a visitor.

"I will not see him!" said Mrs. Oldfield, almost fiercely, looking off the part she had begun to study.

"It is the rough gentleman," said Susan.

"What! Alexander's father? Admit him. He is come to thank me, and well he may. Cruel wretches that we both are!"

Nathan entered, but with a face so rueful, that Mrs. Oldfield saw at once gratitude had not brought him there.

"What have you done, madam?" was his first word.

"Kept my word to you, like a fool," was the answer; "I hope you are come to reproach me, — it would not be complete without that!" And the Oldfield shed a few tears, which this time were half bitter vexation, half fiction.

Nathan had come with that intention, but he was now terror-struck, and afraid to do anything of the kind. He proceeded, however, in mournful tones, to tell her that Alexander had fallen into a state of despondency and desperation which had made him — the father — regret that more innocent madness he had hitherto been so anxious to cure.

"He says he will kill himself," said Nathan. "And if he does he will kill me. Poor boy! all his illusions are kicked head over heels; so he says, however."

"A good job, too!" said Mrs. Oldfield.

"How can you say a good job, when it will be a job for Bedlam?"

"Bedlam!"

"Yes; he is mad!"

"What makes you think he is mad?"

"He says you are not beautiful!

'She has neither heart, grace, nor wit,' says he: in a word, he is insane. I reasoned calmly with him," continued the afflicted father. "I told him he was an idiot; but, I am sorry to say, he answered my affectionate remonstrance with nonsense and curses, and a lot of words, without head or tail to them: he is mad!"

"You cruel old man!" cried Mrs. Oldfield: "have you done nothing to soothe the poor child?"

"O yes!" said the cruel old man, resenting the doubt cast upon his tenderness; "I shoved him into a room, and double-locked him in: and came straight to you for advice about him, you are so clever."

"So it seems!" said she; "I have made everybody unhappy, — you, Alexander, and most of all myself." And tears began to well out of her lovely eyes.

"O dear! — O dear! — O dear! — don't you vex yourself so, my lamb."

But the lamb, *alias* crocodile, insisted upon putting her head gracefully upon Nathan's shoulder, and crying meekly awhile. On this (a man's heart being merely a lump of sugar that melts when woman's eye lets fall a drop of warm water upon it) Nathan loved her: it was intended he should.

"I would give my right arm if you would make him love you again; at all events a little, — a very little indeed. Poor Alexander, he is a fool, a scatter-brain, and, for aught I know, a versifier: but he is my son. I have but him. If he goes mad or dies, his father will lie down and die too."

"Sir!" said the actress, with sudden cheerfulness, and drying her eyes with suspicious rapidity: "bring him to me; and" (patting him slyly on the arm) "you shall see me make him love me more than ever, — ten times more, if you approve, dear sir!"

"Here! he won't come; he rails at you; you are his aversion. O, he is mad! my son is deprived of reason: this comes of those cursed rhymes."

A pause ensued: Oldfield broke it. "I have it!" cried she: "he is an author: they are all alike!" (What did she mean by that?) "Speak to him of 'Berenice.'"

"Whom am I to talk to him about?"

"Berenice!"

"What, is he after another woman now?"

"No, — his tragedy!"

"His tragedy!"

"Ah! I forgot," said she, coolly: "you are not in the secret; he composed it by stealth in your office." She then seated herself at a side-table, and wrote a note with theatrical rapidity.

"Give him this," said she.

Receiving no answer, she looked up, a little surprised, and there was Nathan apoplectic with indignation; his two cheeks, red as beet-root, were puffed out; paternal tenderness was in abeyance: finally he exploded in: "So, this was how my brief-paper went!" and marched off impetuously, throwing down a chair.

"Where are you going?" remonstrated his companion.

"He is an author," was the reply; "he is no son of mine. I'll unlock him and kick him into the wide world."

"What, for consecrating your brief-paper to the Muse?"

"Yes; did you ever know a decent, respectable character write poetry?"

"Yes."

"No! that you never did! Who, now?"

"David! he wrote Hebrew poetry, — the Psalms; and very beautiful poetry, too."

Poor Nathan! he was like a bull, which, in the middle of a gallant charge, receives a bullet in a vital part, and so pulls up, and looks mighty stupid for a moment ere he falls.

But Nathan did not fall; he glared reproach on Mrs. Oldfield for having said a thing, which, though it

did not exactly admit of immediate confutation, was absurd as well as profane, thought he, and resolved to serve Alexander out for it; he told her as much. So then ensued a little piece of private theatricals: Mrs. Oldfield, clasping her hands together, began to go, gracefully, down on her knees, an inch at a time (nothing but great practice enabled her to do it), and remind Nathan that he was a father, — that his son's life was more precious than anything, — that to be angry with the unhappy was cruel, — "Save him! save him!"

Poor Nathan took all this stage business for an unpremeditated effusion of the heart; and, with a tear in his eye, raised the queen of the crocodiles, and with a hideously amiable grin, "I'll forgive him!" said he: "to please you, I'd forgive Old Nick."

With this virtuous resolve and equivocal compliment, he vanished from the presence-chamber, and hurried towards Alexander's retreat.

Oldfield retired hastily to her bedroom, and, having found "Berenice," ran hastily through it once more, and began to study a certain scene which she thought could be turned to her purpose. Having what is called a very quick study, she was soon mistress of the twenty or thirty lines. She then put on a splendid dress, appropriate (according to the ideas of the day) to an Eastern queen. That done, she gave herself to Statira, the part she was to play upon this important evening; but Susan observed a strange restlessness and emotion in her cousin.

"What is the matter, Anne?" said she.

"It is too bad of these men," was the answer. "I ought to be all Statira to-day; and, instead of a tragedy-queen, they make me feel like a human being! This will not do: I cannot have my fictitious feelings, in which thousands are interested, endangered for such a trifle as my real ones"; and, by a stern effort, she glued her eyes to her part, and was Statira.

Meanwhile Nathan had returned to Alexander; and, giving him Mrs. Oldfield's note, bade him instantly accompany him to her house.

Alexander had no sooner read the note, than the color rushed into his pale face, and his eye brightened; but on reflection he begged to be excused from going there. But his father, who had observed the above symptoms, which proved to him the power of this benevolent enchantress, would take no denial; so they returned together to her house. It was all very well the first part of the road; but at sight of the house poor Alexander was seized with a combination of feelings that made it impossible for him to proceed.

"I feel faint, father."

"Lean on me."

"Pray excuse me, — I will go back to Coventry with you, — to the world's end, — but don't take me to that house."

"Come along, ye soft-hearted —"

"Well, then, you must assist me, for my limbs fail me at the idea."

"Mine shall help you," — and he put an arm under his son's shoulder, and hoisted him along in an undeniable manner. And so, in a few minutes more, the attorney was to be seen half drawing, half dragging the poet into the abode of the Siren, which he had first entered (breathing fire and fury against play-actors) to drag his son out of. It was, indeed, a curious reversal of sentiments in a brace of bosoms.

"No, father! no!" sighed Alexander, as his father pulled him into her saloon.

"But I tell you it is for your tragedy," remonstrated the parchment to the paper hero. "It 's business," said he, reproachfully. "Now 't is writ, let us sell it — to greater fools than ourselves, — if we can find them."

The tone in which he uttered the

last sentence conveyed no very sanguine hope, on his part, of a purchaser.

"Why did you bring me here, dear father?" sighed the *désillusioné*. "It was here my idol descended from her pedestal. O reality! you are not worth the pain of living, — the toil of breathing."

"Poor boy!" thought Nathan; "he is in a bad way, — the toil of breathing! — well, I never! — Your tragedy, lad, your tragedy," insinuated he, biting his lips not to be in a rage.

"Ah!" said Alexander, perking up, "it is the last tie that holds me to life. She says in this note that she took it for another, and that mine has merit."

"No doubt! no doubt!" said the other, humoring the absurdity. "How came the Muse (that is the wench's name, I believe) into my office?"

"She used ever to come in," began he, in rapt tones, "when you went out," he added, mighty dryly.

Alexander's next casual observation was to this effect, — that once he had a soul, but that now his lyre was broken.

"That 's soon mended," said his rough comforter; "well, since your *liar* is cracked —"

"I said broken, father, — and for me the business of life is ended."

"Well," said the parent, whose good-humor at this crisis appears to have been inexhaustible, "since your liar is broken, — smashed, I hope, — and your business done, or near it, turn to amusement a bit, my poor lad."

Alexander looked at him, surveyed him from top to toe.

"Amusement!" winnied the inconsolable one, with a ghastly chuckle, — "amusement! Where can broken hearts find amusement?"

"In the Law!" roared Nathan, with cheerful, hopeful, healthy tone and look. "I do," added he; then, seeing bitter incredulity on the poet, he explained, *sotto voce*, "'T is n't as if we were clients, ye fool."

"Never!" shrieked Alexander.

Poor Nathan had commanded his wrath till now, but this energetic "Never!" set him in a blaze.

"Never! you young scamp," shouted he; "but — but — don't put me in a passion, — when I tell ye the exciseman's daughter won't have you on any other terms."

"And I won't have her on any terms, — she is a woman."

"Well, she is on the road to it, — she is a girl, and a very fine one, and you are to make her a woman, — and she will make a man of you, I hope."

"No more women for me," objected the poet. He then confided to an impatient parent his future plan of existence. It was simple, very simple; he purposed to live in a garret in London, hating and hated; so this brought matters to a head.

"I have been too good to you! you are mad! and, by virtue of parental authority, I seize your body, young man."

But the body had legs, and, for once, an attorney failed to effect a seizure.

He slipped under his father's arm, and, getting a table between them, gave vent to his despair.

"Since you are without pity," cried he, "I am lost. Farewell forever!" and he rushed to the door, which opened at that instant.

The father uttered a deprecatory cry, which died off into a semiquaver of admiration, — for, at this moment, a lady of dazzling beauty, arrayed in a glorious robe that swept the ground, crossed the poet's path, before he could reach the door, and, with a calm, but queen-like gesture, rooted him to the spot.

She uttered but one word, but that word, as she spoke it, seemed capable of stilling the waves of the sea.

"Hold!"

No louder than you and I speak, reader, but irresistibly. Such majesty

and composure came from her, upon them, with this simple monosyllable. They stood spellbound. Alexander thought no more of flight; nor Nathan of pursuit.

At last, by one of those inspirations that convey truth more surely than human calculation is apt to, the poet cried out: "This is herself, the other was a personation!"

"Berenice" took no notice of this exclamation. She continued, with calm majesty: —

"Listen to a queen, whose steadfast will
In chains is royal, in Rome unconquered still;
O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll,
I still retain the empire of my soul."

Her two hearers stood spellbound. And then did Alexander taste the greatest pleasure earth affords, — to be a poet, and to love a great actress, and to hear the magic lips he loved speak his own verse. Love, taste, and vanity were all gratified at once. With what rich flesh and blood she clothed his shadowy creation; the darling of his brain was little more than a skeleton. It was reserved for the darling of his heart to complete the creation. And then his words, O what a majesty and glory they took from her heavenly tongue! They were words no more, — they were thunderbolts of speech, and sparks of audible soul. He wondered at himself and them.

Oldfield spoke this line,

"O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll,"

with a grand, though plaintive swell, like the sea itself: it was really wonderful.

Alexander had no conception he or any man had ever written so grand a line as "O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll." He was in heaven. A moment like this is beyond the lot of earth, and compensates the smart that is apt to be in store, all in good time, for the poet that loves a great actress, that is to say, a creature with the tongue of an angel, the principles of a weasel, and the passions of a fish!

"And have those lips graced words of mine?" gasped Alexander. "My verses, father!"

"His verses! no!" said Nathan, addressing the actress; "can he write like the sound of a trumpet?"

"Yes! Alexander, I like your play, particularly a scene where this poor queen sacrifices her love to the barbarous prejudices of her captors."

"My favorite scene! my favorite scene! Father, she likes my favorite scene!"

"Gentlemen, be so good as to lend yourselves to the situation a moment. Here, Susan!" In came Susan, her eyes very red; she had been employed realizing that Alexander was not to be hers.

"You, sir!" continued Mrs. Oldfield, addressing Nathan, "are the Consul, — the inexorable father."

"O, am I?"

"Yes! you must stand there, — on that flower, — like a marble pillar, — deaf to all my entreaties. You are about to curse your son."

"I curse my boy? Never!"

"Father, for Heaven's sake, do what she bids you."

"Dress the scene," continued she, — "farther off, Susan, — this is tragedy, don't huddle together as they do in farce."

"But I am in such trouble, Anne."

"Of course you are, — you are Tibulla, — you are jealous. You spy all our looks, catch all our words. Now, mind your business. The stage is mine. I speak to my Tiberius." She kicked her train adroitly out of the way, and flowed like a wave on a calm day towards Tiberius, who stood entranced, almost staggering under the weight of his own words, as they rolled over him: —

"Obey the mandate of unfeeling Rome;
Make camps your hearth, the battle-field your home;
Fly vain delights, fight for a glorious name,
Forget that e'er we met, and live for Fame."

(In this last line she began to falter a little.)

> "Alas! I, whom lost kingdoms could not move,
> Am mistress of myself no more. I love!
> I love you, yet we part; — my race proscribe,
> My royal hand disdain this barbarous tribe.
> This diadem, that all the nations prize,
> Is an unholy thing in Roman eyes."

She did not merely speak, she acted these lines. With what a world of dignity and pathos she said, "My royal hand disdain!" and in speaking of the "diadem" she slowly raised both hands, one somewhat higher than the other, and pointed to her coronet, for one instant. The *pose* would have been invaluable to Sculptor or Painter.

"We are in the wrong," began Nathan, soothingly, for the Queen had slightly indicated him as one of "the barbarous tribe." "A lady like you. — The Romans are fools-asses-dolts-and-beasts," cried Nathan, running the four substantives into one.

"Hush! father!" cried the author, reproachfully.

> "And you, young maid, kill not my wounded heart;
> Ah! bid me not from my Tiberius part."

(Tears seemed to choke her utterance.)

"O no! cousin," drawled out Susan, "sooner than you should die of grief — it *is* a blow, but I give him up — "

"Hold your tongue, Susan! you put me out."

"Now it is too melting," whined Nathan; "leave off, — there, do ye leave off, — it is too melting."

"Is n't it?" said Alexander, *rayonnant*. "Go on! go on! You whose dry eye, — you whose dry eye, Mrs. Oldfield."

Mrs. Oldfield turned full on Nathan, and, sinking her voice into a deeper key, she drove the following lines, slowly and surely, through and through his poor, unresisting, buttery heart: —

> "You whose dry eye looks down on all our tears,
> Pity yourself, — ah! for yourself have fears.
> Alone upon the earth, some bitter day,
> You 'll call your son your trembling steps to stay.
> Old man! regret, remorse, will come too late;
> In vain you 'll pity then our sad, sad fate."

"But, my good sir, you don't bear me out by your dumb play, — you are to be the unrelenting sire — "

"Now, how ca-ca-ca-can I, when you make me blubber?" gulped out he "whose dry eyes," etc.

"And me!" whined Susan.

"Aha!" cried Alexander, with a hilarious shout, "I 've made them cry with my verses!"

A smile, an arch smile, wreathed the Tragic Queen's countenance.

Alexander caught it, and, not being yet come to his full conceit, pulled himself up short. "No," cried he, "no! it was you who conquered them with my weak weapon; you whose face is spirit, and whose voice is music. Enchantress — "

Now Alexander, who was gracefully inclining towards the charmer, received a sudden push from the excited Nathan, and fell plump on his knees.

"Speak again," cried he, "for you are my queen. I love you. What is to be my fate?"

"Alexander," said Anne, fluttering as she had never fluttered before, "you have so many titles to my esteem. O no! that won't do. See, sir, he does it almost as well as I do.

> "Live, for I love you;
> My life is his who saved that life from harm;
> This pledge attests the valor of your arm."

Here look!" And she returned him his pocket-book.

"His pocket-book!" said Nathan, his eyes glazed with wonder. "Why, how did his tragedy come in his pocket-book? I mean, his pocket-book in his tragedy? which is the true part, and which is the lie? O dear! the dog has made his father cry, and, now

I have begun, I don't like to leave off somehow." Then, before his several queries could be answered, he continued, "So this is play-acting, and it 's a sin! Well, then, I like it." And he dried his eyes, and cast a look of brilliant satisfaction on all the company.

He was then silent, but Alexander saw him the next minute making signals to him to put more fire and determination into his amorous proposals.

Before he could execute these instructions, a clock on the chimney-piece struck three.

The actress started, and literally bundled father and son out of the house, for in those day plays began at five o'clock.

Mrs. Oldfield, however, invited them to sup with her, conditionally; if she was not defeated in "The Rival Queens." "If I am," said she, "it will be your interest to keep out of my way; for of course I shall attribute it to the interruptions and distractions of this morning."

She said this with an arch, and, at the same time, rather wicked look, and Alexander's face burned in a moment.

"Oh!" cried he, "I should be miserable for life."

"Should you?" said Anne.

"You know I must."

"Well then" (and a single gleam of lightning shot from her eyes), "I must not be defeated."

At five o'clock, the theatre was packed to the ceiling, and the curtain rose upon "The Rival Queens," about which play much nonsense has been talked. It is true, there is bombast in it, and one or two speeches that smack of Bedlam; but there is not more bombast than in other plays of the epoch, and there is ten times as much fire. The play has also some excellent turns of language and some great strokes of nature; in particular the representation of two different natures agitated to the utmost by the same passion, jealousy, is full of genius.

"The Rival Queens" is a play for the stage, not the closet. Its author was a great reader, and the actors who had the benefit of his reading charmed the public in all the parts, but in process of time actors arose who had not that advantage, and "Alexander the Great" became too much for them. They could not carry off his smoke, or burn with his fire. The female characters, however, retained their popularity for many years after the death of the author, and of Betterton, the first "Alexander." They are the two most equal female characters that exist in tragedy. Slight preference is commonly given by actors to the part of "Roxana"; but when Mrs. Bracegirdle selected that part, Mrs. Oldfield took "Statira" with perfect complacency.

The theatre was full, the audience in an unusual state of excitement.

The early part of the first act received but little attention. At length Statira glided on the scene. She was greeted with considerable applause; in answer to which, she did not duck and grin, according to rule, but, sweeping a rapid, yet dignified courtesy, she barely indicated her acknowledgments, remaining Statira.

> "Give me a knife, a draught of poison, flames!
> Swell, heart! break, break, thou stubborn thing!"

Her predecessors had always been violent in this scene. Mrs. Oldfield made distress its prominent sentiment. The critics thought her too quiet, but she stole upon the hearts of the audience, and enlisted their sympathy on her side before the close of the act.

Mrs. Bracegirdle, who stood at the wing during the scene, turned round to her toady, and said, shrugging her shoulders: "O, if that is all the lady can do!"

In the third act Mrs. Bracegirdle made her *entrée* with great spirit, speaking, as she came on, the line,

> "O, you have ruined me! I shall be mad!"

She was received with great applause, on which she instantly dropped Roxana, and became Mrs. Bracegirdle, all wreathed in smiles; the applause being ended, she returned to Roxana as quickly as it is possible to do after such a deviation. She played the scene with immense spirit and fire, and the applause was much greater than Statira had obtained in the first act.

Applause is the actor's test of success.

The two queens now came into collision, and their dialogue is so dramatic, that I hope I may be excused for quoting it, with all its faults: —

Roxana. Madam, I hope you will a queen forgive;
Roxana weeps to see Statira grieve;
How noble is the brave resolve you make,
To quit the world for Alexander's sake!
Vast is your mind, you dare thus greatly die,
And yield the king to one so mean as I;
'T is a revenge will make the victor smart,
And much I fear your death will break his heart.

Statira. You counterfeit, I fear, and know too well
How much your eyes all beauties else excel:
Roxana, who, though not a princess born,
In chains could make the mighty victor mourn.
Forgetting power when wine had made him warm,
And senseless, yet even then you knew to charm:
Preserve him by those arts that cannot fail,
While I the loss of what I love bewail.

Roxana. I hope your majesty will give me leave
To wait you to the grove, where you would grieve;
Where, like the turtle, you the loss will moan
Of that dear mate, and murmur all alone.

Statira. No, proud triumpher o'er my falling state,
Thou shalt not stay to fill me with my fate;
Go to the conquest which your wiles may boast,
And tell the world you left Statira lost.
Go seize my faithless Alexander's hand,
Both hand and heart were once at my command;
Grasp his loved neck, die on his fragrant breast,
Love him like me whose love can't be expressed.
He must be happy, and you more than blest,
While I in darkness hide me from the day,
That with my mind I may his form survey,
And think so long, till I think life away.

Roxana. No, sickly virtue, no,
Thou shalt not think, nor thy love's loss bemoan,
Nor shall past pleasures through thy fancy run;
That were to make thee blest as I can be;
But thy no-thought I must, I will decree;
As thus, I'll torture thee till thou art mad.
And then no thought to purpose can be had.

Statira. How frail, how cowardly, is woman's mind!
We shriek at thunder, dread the rustling wind,
And glittering swords the brightest eyes will blind;
Yet when strong jealousy inflames the soul,
The weak will roar, and calms to tempests roll.
Rival, take heed, and tempt me not too far;
My blood may boil, and blushes show a war.

Roxana. When you retire to your romantic cell,
I'll make thy solitary mansion hell!
Thou shalt not rest by day, nor sleep by night,
But still Roxana shall thy spirit fright;
Wanton in dreams if thou dar'st dream of bliss,
Thy roving ghost may think to steal a kiss;
But when to his sought bed thy wandering air
Shall for the happiness it wished repair,
How will it groan to find thy rival there?
How ghastly wilt thou look when thou shalt see,
Through the drawn curtains, that great man and me,
Wearied with laughing joys shot to the soul,
While thou shalt grinning stand, and gnash thy teeth, and howl!

Statira. O barbarous rage! my tears I cannot keep,
But my full eyes in spite of me will weep.

Roxana. The king and I in various pictures drawn,
Clasping each other, shaded o'er with lawn,
Shall be the daily presents I will send,
To help thy sorrow to her journey's end:
And when we hear at last thy hour draws nigh,
My Alexander, my dear love, and I,
Will come and hasten on thy lingering fates,
And smile and kiss thy soul out through the grates.

Statira. 'T is well, I thank thee; thou hast waked a rage,
Whose boiling now no temper can assuage;
I meet thy tides of jealousy with more,
Dare thee to duel, and dash thee o'er and o'er.

Roxana. What would you dare?

Statira. Whatever you dare do,
My warring thoughts the bloodiest tracts pursue;
I am by love a fury made, like you;
Kill or be killed, thus acted by despair.

Roxana. Sure the disdained Statira does not dare!
Statira. Yes, towering proud Roxana, but I dare.
Roxana. I tower indeed o'er thee;
Like a fair wood, the shade of kings I stand,
While thou, sick weed, dost but infest the land.
Statira. No, like an ivy I will curl thee round,
Thy sapless trunk of all its pride confound,
Then, dry and withered, bend thee to the ground.
What Sysigambis' threats, objected fears,
My sister's sighs, and Alexander's tears,
Could not effect, thy rival rage has done;
My soul, whose start at breach of oaths begun,
Shall to thy ruin violated run.
I'll see the king in spite of all I swore,
Though cursed, that thou mayst never see him more.

In this female duel Statira appeared to great advantage. She exhibited the more feminine character of the two. The marked variety of sentiment she threw into each speech contrasted favorably with the other's somewhat vixenish monotony; and every now and then she gave out volcanic flashes of great power, all the more effective for the artful reserve she had hitherto made of her physical resources. The effect was electrical when she, the tender woman, suddenly wheeled upon her opponent with the words, "Rival, take heed," etc. And now came the climax; now it was that Mrs. Bracegirdle paid for her temporary success. She had gone to the end of her tether long ago, but her antagonist had been working on the great principle of Art, — Climax. She now put forth the strength she had economized; at each speech she rose and swelled higher, and higher, and higher. Her frame dilated, her voice thundered, her eyes lightened, and she swept the audience with her in the hurricane of her passion. There was a moment's dead silence, and then the whole theatre burst into acclamations, which were renewed again and again ere the play was suffered to proceed. At the close of the scene Statira had overwhelmed Roxana; and, as here she had electrified the audience, so in the concluding passage of the play she melted them to tears, — the piteous anguish of her regret at being separated by death from her lover; —

"What, must I lose my life, my lord, forever?"

And then her pitying tenderness for his sorrow; and then her prayer to him to live; and, last, that exquisite touch of woman's love, more angelic than man's, —

"Spare Roxana's life;
"'T was love of you that caused her give me death";

and her death, with no thought but love, love, love, upon her lips; — all this was rendered so tenderly and so divinely, that no heart was untouched, and few eyes were dry now in the crowded theatre. Statira died; the other figures remained upon the stage, but to the spectators the play was over; and when the curtain fell there was but one cry, "Oldfield!" "Oldfield!"

In those days people conceived opinions of their own in matters dramatic, and expressed them then and there. *Roma locuta est*, and Nance Oldfield walked into her dressing-room the queen of the English stage.

Two figures in the pit had watched this singular battle with thrilling interest. Alexander sympathized alternately with the actress as well as the queen. Nathan, to tell the truth, after hanging his head most sheepishly for the first five minutes, yielded wholly to the illusion of the stage, and was "transported out of this ignorant present" altogether; to him Roxana and Statira were *bona fide* queens, women, and rivals. The Oldworthys were seated in Critics' Row; and after a while, Nathan's enthusiasm and excitement disturbed old gentlemen who came to judge two actresses, not to drink poetry all alive O.

His neighbors proposed to eject Nathan; the said Nathan on this gave them a catalogue of actions, any one of which, he said, would re-estab-

lish his constitutional rights, and give him his remedy in the shape of damages; he wound up with letting them know he was an attorney at law. On this they abandoned the idea of meddling with him as hastily as boys drop the baked half-pence in a scramble provided by their philanthropical seniors. So now Mrs. Oldfield was queen of the stage, and Alexander had access to her as her admirer, and Nathan had a long private talk with her, and then with some misgivings went down to Coventry.

A story ought to end with a marriage: ought it not? Well, this one does not, because there are reasons that compel the author to tell the truth. The poet did not marry the actress, and beget tragedies and comedies. Love does not always end in marriage, even behind the scenes of a theatre. But it led to a result, the value of which my old readers know, and my young ones will learn, — it led to a very tender and lifelong friendship. And O, how few out of the great aggregate of love affairs lead to so high, or so good, or so affectionate a permanency as is a tender friendship!

One afternoon Mrs. Oldfield wrote rather a long letter thus addressed in the fashion of the day: —

To Mr. Nathan Oldworthy,
Attorney at Law,
In the Town of Coventry,
At his house there in the Market Street.
This, with all despatch.

Nathan read it, and said, "God forgive me for thinking ill of any people, because of their business!" and his eyes filled.

The letter described to Nathan an interview the actress had with Alexander. That interview (several months after our tale) was a long, and, at some moments, a distressing one, especially to poor Alexander; but it had been long meditated, and was firmly carried out; in that interview this generous woman conferred one of the greatest benefactions on Alexander one human being can hope to confer on another. She persuaded a Dramatic Author to turn Attorney. He was very reluctant then; and very grateful afterwards. These two were never to one another as though all had never been. They were friends as long as they were on earth together. This was not so very long. Alexander lived to eighty-six; but the great Oldfield died at forty-seven. Whilst she lived, she always consulted her Alexander in all difficulties. One day she sent for him; and he came sadly to her bedside; it was to make her will. He was sadder than she was. She died. She lay in state like a royal queen; and noblemen and gentlemen vied to hold her pall as they took her to the home she had earned in Westminster Abbey. Alexander, faithful to the last, carried out all her last requests; and he tried, poor soul, to rescue her Fame from the cruel fate that awaits the great artists of the scene, — oblivion. He wrote her epitaph. It is first-rate of its kind; and prime Latin for once in a way: —

**Hic juxta requiescit
Tot inter Poetarum laudata nomina
ANNA OLDFIELD.
Nec ipsa minore laude digna.
Nunquam ingenium idem ad partes
diversissimas nobilius fuit.
Ita tamen ut ad singulas
non facta sed nata esse videretur.
In Tragœdiis
Formæ splendor, oris dignitas, incessus majestas,
Tanta vocis suavitate temperabantur
Ut nemo esset tam agrestis tam durus spectator.
Quin in admirationem totus raperetur.
In Comœdia autem
Tanta vis, tam venusta hilaritas,
Tam curiosa felicitas,
Ut neque sufficerent spectando ocull,
Neque plaudendo manus.**

There, brother, I have done what I can for your sweetheart, and I have reprinted your Epitaph, after one hundred years.

But neither you nor I, nor all our pens, can fight against the laws that rule the Arts. Each of the great Arts fails in something, is unap-

proachably great in others (of that anon). The great Artists of the Scene are paid in cash; they cannot draw bills at fifty years' date.

They are meteors that blaze in the world's eye, — and vanish.

We are farthing candles that cast a gleam all around four yards square, for hours and hours.

Alexander lived a life of business, honest, honorable, and graceful too; for the true poetic feeling is ineradicable; it colors a man's life, — is not colored by it. And when he had reached a great old age, it befell that Alexander's sight grew dim, and his spirit was weary of the great city, and his memory grew weak, and he forgot parchments, and dates, and reports, and he began to remember, as though it was yesterday, the pleasant fields, where he had played among the lambs and the buttercups in the morning of his days. And the old man said calmly, "Vixi! Therefore now I will go down, and see once more those pleasant fields; and I will sit in the sun a little while; and then I will lie beside my father in the old churchyard." And he did so. It is near a hundred years ago now.

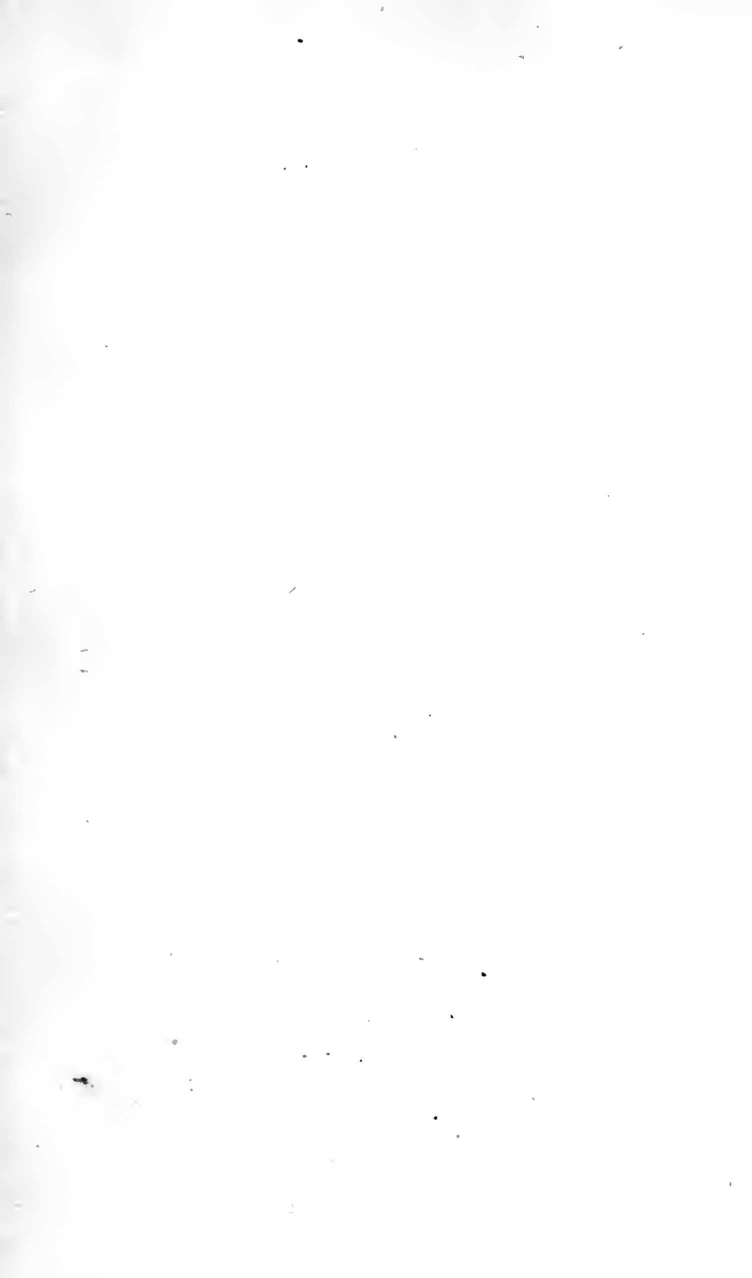
So Anne Oldfield sleeps in Westminster Abbey, near the poets whose thoughts took treble glory from her, while she adorned the world. And Alexander Oldworthy lies humbly beneath the shadow of the great old lofty spire in the town of Coventry.

Requiescant in pace!

"And all Christian souls, I pray Heaven."

PROPRIA QUÆ MARIBUS.

A JEU D'ESPRIT.



NOTE.

THIS *jeu d'esprit* was written some years ago, before the Author was so fortunate as to establish friendly relations with American Publishers, and, may he venture to say? with the American Public. He has a reason for wishing this to be known.

C. R.

LONDON, September, 1857.

PROPRIA QUÆ MARIBUS.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN COURTENAY was the son of Richard Courtenay. Richard was the younger son of a good Devonshire family: his elder brother inherited four thousand a year, — he fifteen hundred pounds down, from the same relative, his father, — *vive l'Angleterre!*

His fifteen hundred pounds would n't do in a genteel country like England: so he went to America and commerce. He died richer than the owner of Courtenay Court.

John, his son, was richer still by the same honorable means.

He was also a stanch republican: the unparalleled rise and grandeur of the United States might well recommend their institutions to any candid mind; and John Courtenay spent his leisure moments in taking the gloss off John Bull's hide: he was not so spiteful against him as some of those gentry who owe their cleverness to themselves, but their existence to Bull, and forget it: his line was rather cool contempt; the old country was worn out and decayed: progressing like a crab instead of going ahead, etc., etc., etc., etc.

For all this, one fine day something seemed to crack inside John Courtenay's bosom, when he saw an announcement from the modest pen of Robins that Courtenay Court was in the market.

He did not think such an advertisement would have interested him any more than Consols 96 and a half, — but it did.

This gentleman was at the moment working a loan at 5 per cent with Kentucky, and he had promised himself to be in it to the tune of £ 50,000; but all this day he took more snuff than was good for him, and the next day, after breakfast and a revery, he suddenly burst out, "Pshaw! the worst investment, in the worst country; a sinking interest in a sinking kingdom."

"Papa!" said a musical voice, "your paying me no attention will, I fear, end in your being worried."

This worrying meant a certain violent system of kissing, with which the speaker used to fall upon John Courtenay when he was very good, or very bad: she used it indifferently as a reward or punishment.

This time, to her surprise, the old gentleman answered her smiling threat by opening his arms in a minute, and saying, "My child!"

In another moment Caroline Courtenay was in his arms; he pressed his lips to her brow and said, "I will do it! I will do it!"

"What will you do, papa?"

"That is my business, I reckon," said he, recovering the statesman and man of business with rather a brusque reaction: and off he bustled to Wall Street, "where merchants most do congregate." Shakespeare hem!

Caroline stood irresolute and had a mind to whimper. She thought her affection had been for once half repulsed.

Caroline! doubt anything — everything — but a parent's love for his only child.

CHAPTER II.

In three weeks after this the hammer came to Courtenay Court; and that hammer was wielded (I use the term he would have selected) by the St. George of the auction-room.

Need I say the wood and water of the estate had previously been painted in language as flowing as the one and as exuberant as the foliage of the other?

In the large hall were two fire-places, where piles of beech log blazed and crackled.

Mr. Robins made his bow and up went Courtenay Court, manor, and lordship, in a single lot.

There were present, besides farmers, some forty country gentlemen, many of whom looked business: they had not examined their own horizon, as John Courtenay, merchant, had. Land was in vogue with them.

I don't wonder at it. Certainly a landed estate is "an animal with its mouth always open." But compare the physical perception and enjoyment of landed wealth with that of consols and securities.

Can I get me rosy cheeks, health, and good-humor riding up and down my Peruvian bonds? can I go out shooting upon my parchment, or in summer sit under the shadow of my mortgage deed and bob for commas and troll for semicolons in my river of ink that meanders through my meadow of sheepskin?

Wherefore I really think land will always tempt even the knowing ones, until some vital change shall take place in society; for instance, till the globe makes its exit in smoke, and the blue curtain comes down on the creation.

Three or four gentlemen held the bidding up till about thirty thousand pounds; it then became flat.

And now one Adam Eaves, a farmer, pushed sheepishly forward, made an advance on the bidding, and looked ashamed.

Why lookest thou ashamed, O yeoman, Bulwark of our Isle?

This is why? Adam Eaves farmed two farms; and he had for three years been praying both his landlords for decrease of rent, upon grounds that nowise tallied with his little offer of thirty thousand one hundred pounds down on the nail for Courtenay Manor; and therefore looked he ashamed, the simple-minded yeoman, Bulwark of our Isle.

Joshua Tanner, linen-draper in the market-town, he whose cry for ten years had been the decay of retail trade, was so surprised at this, that, thrown off his guard, he bid an hundred more; but, the mask once thrown off, he blushed not, but sprinkled insulting arrogance on all around.

Both these worthies, who, unlike us writers, had for years announced themselves beneath their true value, gave way to heavier metal, and the estate began to reach its real worth; it was at £38,000.

There was a pause. St. George looked jocose, and felt uneasy. Were they running cunning like their own hounds, these south country gentlemen?

He now looked carefully all round the room: a long, attenuated figure with a broad-brimmed hat on, standing by a distant window, met his eye, and, as if to oblige him, now for the first time made a cool, nonchalant bid by nodding his head; round went all the company on their heels with their backs to the auctioneer, as when, in the last row of the Pit, two personages of this our day go to fisticuffs, I have seen the audience turn its back on the quarrel of Brutus and Cassius, or Melantius and Amyntor.

Forty two, three, four thousand were reached; two country gentlemen bidders turned red and white, — the pin bid on, rythmically, at measured intervals, like a chaff-cutting machine, unconscious of opposition, indifferent to result.

The estate was now at thirty years purchase; a hum that went round the

room announced this fact without a word spoken. All the hounds had tailed off but one. He went on; the two bidders were strangely contrasted; it seemed odd they could both want the same thing. In shape one was like a pin; the other a pin-cushion.

Our friend at the window was all one color, like wash-leather, or an actor by daylight; the other, with his head of white hair as thick as a boy's, and his red brown cheeks, and his bright eye, reflected comfort as brightly as Hampton Court with its red brick and white facings, and cheered the eye like old Sun and old Frost battling for a December day.

At last the thin and sallow personage uttered these words: "Forty-seven thousand pounds!" in a nasal twang, that seemed absurdly unjust to the grand ideas such words excite in elegant minds conscious how many refined pleasures can be had for £47,000.

His antagonist's head sunk for a moment.

He sighed, and, instead of bidding higher, or holding his tongue, the two business alternatives open to him, he said, "Then it will never be mine!"

He said this so simply, yet with so much pain, that some of those good souls, who, unless they have two days to think it over with their wives or sisters, are sure to take the pathetic for the ludicrous, horse-laughed at him.

He turned away. Mr. Robins did not waste a second in idle flourishes; "When a thing is settled, end it," thought he; he knocked the lot down now as he would a china teapot in a sale of 200 lots, — and the old oaks of Courtenay bowed their heads to a Yankee merchant.

The buyer stepped up to the auctioneer.

Mr. Ralph Seymour, the last bidder, made for the door: at the door he buttoned with difficulty his coat over his breast, for his heart was swelling and his eye glistened, — it was a bitter disappointment, — we who live in towns can hardly think how bitter. Such sales do not come every day in the country: his estate marched for a mile and a half with the Courtenays. He had counted on no competition but that of his neighbors: he had bought it from them: but a man who happened to want an estate had come from London, or, as it was now whispered, from New York. Any other estate would have suited *him* as well, but he *would* have this.

Poor old gentleman! He had told Mrs. Seymour she should walk this evening under the great birch-trees of the Courtenays, — and they be hers!

They had been married 40 years, and he had never broken his word to her before.

The auctioneer read the buyer's card.

"Sold to Mr. Jonathan Sims," said he, responding to the open curiosity of the company.

"Ugh!" went one or two provincials, and then dead silence.

"Acting," continued the auctioneer, "for Mr. John Courtenay of New York."

There was a pause, — a hurried buzz, — and then, to Mr. Sims's surprise, a thundering "Hurrah!" burst out that made the rafters ring and the windows rattle.

"It 's Master Richard's son," shouted Adam Eaves; "My father 's ridden many 's the time with Master Richard, he rode the mule, and father the jenny-ass after Squire Courtenay's hounds, HURRAIH!"

Omnes. "Hurraih!"

The thorough-bred old John Bull at the door, Mr. Ralph Seymour, seemed glad of an excuse to get rid of some bile foreign to his nature. In three strides he was alongside Jonathan, and had he been French it was plain he would have said something worth repeating, but as he was only English he grasped Mr. Sims's hand like a vice, and — asked him to dinner!

That is the English idea, — you must ask a gentleman to dinner, and you must *give* a poor man a day's work, — that wins him.

John Courtenay came home: I coolly omit the objections he took *chemin faisant* to things in the old country. They would fill a volume with just remonstrance.

He came to his own lodge gate, — the old man who opened it sung out: —

"Oh! Master John, how like you be to Master Richard, sure*ly*."

Courtenay was astonished; he found this old boy had been thinking of him all that way off for sixty years, ever since his birth transpired.

The old housekeeper welcomed him with tears in her eyes.

He dined in a room enriched with massive old carvings; he walked after dinner under his avenue of birches with silver stems of gigantic thickness and patriarchal age. The housekeeper put him in a bed his father had slept in when a boy.

Soon the country gentlemen made acquaintance with him. The strong idea of distributive justice he had brought from Commerce, and his business habits, caused him to be consulted and valued.

It is a fact that after some months in Devonshire he developed a trait or two of Toryism; but they could not make him believe that nations are the property of Kings, and countries their home farms. They did all they could think of to corrupt him. They made him perforce a justice of the peace; he remonstrated and pooh-poohed, but was no sooner one than he infused fresh blood into the withered veins of justice in his district.

He became a referee in all nice matters of rural equity. In short his neighbors had all overcome any little prejudice, and had learned his value when — they lost him. His time was come to close an honorable life by a peaceful death.

Short as had been his career among them, the whole county followed him to his resting-place among the Courtenays in Conyton Church vault.

He left all his land and all his money by will to his daughter; to his will he attached a paper containing some requests.

One was that she would provide for the aged housekeeper, and lodge-keeper, who knew her father and welcomed him home, — he called it home! But there was nothing about where he wished her to live: he did not decide the great little question, is America or England the right place for us globules to swell and burst in?

In other words, when he wrote these memoranda, John Courtenay was dying, and thought less about the kingdom whence came his root, or the state where his flowers had bloomed, than of a country he had learned to look towards by being neither Yankee nor Briton so much as an honest, God-fearing man. So his thoughts were now upon a land, older than Little England, broader than the Great United States; a land where Americans and English are brothers.

And I warn them, and all men, to be brothers here, lest they never see that land.

Caroline Courtenay remained at New York. There was little to tempt her to leave her birthplace, and visit the country which seemed to her to have robbed her of her father.

It happened, however, almost three years after Mr. Courtenay's death, that a fresh circumstance changed her feeling in that respect.

Young Reginald Seymour, who had come to see the States, had brought letters of introduction to her, and had prolonged his stay from a fortnight to eight months: and he was eloquent in praise of Courtenay Court, and of his father's place which adjoined it; and what Reginald praised Caroline desired to see.

Miss Courtenay combined two qualities which are generally seen in opposition, — beauty and wit. On her wit, however, she had latterly cast some doubt by a trick she had fallen

into. She had been detected thinking for herself, — ay, more than once. This came of being left an orphan, poor thing; she had no one to warn her day by day against this habit, which is said always to lead her sex into trouble, — when they venture upon it: luckily they don't do it very often.

Wealth, wit, and beauty, meeting with young blood, were enough to spoil a character: all they had done in this case was to give her a more decided one than most young ladies of her age have, or could carry without spilling.

It so happened one day that a question much agitated in parts of the United States occupied a semicircle of ladies, of whom Miss Courtenay was one. This was a new costume, introduced by a highly respectable lady, the editor of a paper called the "Lily," and wife of a lawyer of some eminence at Seneca Falls.

The company generally were very severe on this costume, and proceeded upwards from the pantalets to the morals of the inventor, which, though approved at Seneca by simple observation, were depreciated at New York by intelligent inference.

When the conversation began, Miss Courtenay looked down on the Bloomer costume with supercilious contempt.

But its vituperators shook her opinion, by a very simple process, — they gave their reasons!!!!

"It is awkward and absurd," said one, as by way of contrast she glided majestically to the piano to sing: as she spoke her foot went through her dress to the surprise of — nobody.

"It is highly indelicate to expose any portion of the — in short — the, the, the — ankle," continued the lady seating herself.

"It is! Miss Jemima," purred a smooth, deferential gentleman, looking over her; his eye dwelt complacently on two snowy hemispheres.

A little extravagance injures a good cause.

At last Miss Courtenay, fired by opposition and unreasonable reasons, began to favor the general theory of Bloomer.

Next she converted several friends; still to the theory only. This got wind, and a general attack was made on her by her well-wishers. Their arguments and sneers completed the business; and she was bloomerized at heart, when the following scene took place in her own kitchen.

Eliza the cook was making pastry on the long oak table; her face was redder than her work accounted for.

"Well, Eliza," said Mrs. Primmer, the housekeeper, "your tongue won't stop of itself; of course not; so I'll stop it."

"Do, ma'am," suggested Eliza, with meek incredulity.

"You sha' n't wear them here," said Mrs. Primmer.

"La', ma'am," said the housemaid Angelina, "she had better wear them in the house than in the street with two hundred boys at her heels."

"That is not my meaning," answered Mrs. Primmer. "I hired you for a female cook, and the moment you put on — things that don't belong to a woman, — our bargain 's broke, and you go."

"Well, it *is* an indelicate dress," observed Angelina: then turning to John Giles, Eliza's sweetheart, who was eating pork at the dresser, "don't you think so, Mr. Giles?" inquired she, affectedly.

"I does!" said Giles, with his mouth full. Giles was a Briton in the suite of young Seymour.

"Vulgar!" suggested Angelina.

"And no mistake," said Giles, — "it 's as vulgar as be blowed," added he, clenching the nail with his polished hammer.

"And who asked your opinion?" inquired Eliza, sharply.

"Angelina!" replied Giles, — Giles was matter-of-fact.

Eliza. "I mean to wear it for as vulgar as 't is."

Giles. "Then you had better look out for another man." (Applause.)

Eliza. " O, they are always to be had without *looking out:* so long as there 's pickled pork in the kitchen, they 'll *look in.*"

Angelina. " Well, I think a woman should dress to gratify the men " (with an *œillade* at Giles) : " not to imitate them."

Eliza. " The men ! so long as we sweep the streets for them with our skirts, they are all right. You talk of delicacy : is dirt delicacy ? "

On this she whipped off a chair by the fire a gown that had met with a misfortune : it had been out walking on a wet day. Eliza put it viciously under Angelina's nose, who recoiled. An accurate description of it would soil these pages.

" Is that pretty ? " continued cook, " to carry a hundred-weight of muck wherever you go ? "

" Dirt can't be helped," retorted Primmer. " Indecency can."

" Indecent ? " cried Eliza, with a face like scarlet. " Who 's going to be indecent in this kitchen ? "

" The gals," suggested Angelina, " who wear — who wear — "

" Small-clothes," put in Giles.

A grateful glance repaid him for extricating the fair from a conventional difficulty.

" What, it 's indecent because it shows your instep, I suppose. You go into the drawing-room this evening, and the young ladies shall show you more than ever a Bloomer will. 'Women's delicacy'!" said Eliza, putting her hand under the paste and bringing it down on the reverse with a whack. " Gammon ! Fashion is what we care for, not delicacy. If it was the fashion to tie our right foot to our left ear, would n't you do it ? "

" No ! " said Angelina, with her little hesitation.

" Then I would ! " cried Eliza, sacrificing herself to her argument. " What did they wear last year," continued this orator. " Eh ? answer me that whisking to and fro as they walked and drawing everybody's attention."

In speaking, Eliza was worse than I am in writing, she never punctuated at all.

" So you mean to wear them ? " inquired Mrs. Primmer, coming back from the argument to the point.

Eliza. " Yes, I do ! "

Observe ! at the beginning of the argument she had no such intention.

Mrs. Primmer. " Then I give you a month's warning, here (and now), Eliza Staunton ! "

Eliza. " And I won't take it from you Mrs. Primmer."

Mrs Primmer. " Who will you take it from then ? "

Eliza. " The mistress or nobody."

Angelina. " La ! Lisa ! You know she never speaks to a servant."

Eliza. " She speaks to Mrs. Primmer, don't she ? "

Mrs. Primmer. " Am I a servant, hussy ? Am I a servant ? "

Eliza. " Yes ! you are ; we are all servants here : some is paid for doing the work, and other some for looking on and interrupting it here and there."

Mrs. Primmer (*gasping*). " Leave the kitchen, young woman."

Eliza. " The kitchen 's mine and the housekeeper's room is yours old woman."

" Go to the mistress and tell her I want to come and speak to her ! " gasped the insulted housekeeper, deprived of motion by her fury.

Angelina took but one step before Eliza caught her, held the roller high above her head, and saying, " If you offer to go there I 'll roll ye up into my paste," pushed her down into a chair, where she roared and blubbered.

" O you rude, brutal-behaved woman," cried Primmer, " I shall faint."

Helps have an insolence all their own : they say the most cutting things with a tone of extra sweetness and courtesy, that has the effect of fire quenched with sweet oil, or brandy softened with oil of vitriol.

With such sweet and measured

tones Eliza said, half under her breath: "Giles! you go — into the housekeeper's room — and look behind the door — and you'll find the biggest brandy bottle you ever did see: Mrs. Primmer wants it!!!!!"

This dry little speech was hartshorn: some spring seemed to have been pressed, so erect bounced Mrs. Primmer!

She bustled up to Eliza, and, with a spite that threatened annihilation, gave her an infinitesimal pat on the back of her head, and retired precipitately with a face in which misgiving already took the place of fury.

Eliza put down the roller quite leisurely, and cleaned her fingers slowly of the dough.

"It is lucky for you," said she, firmly, "that you are the same age as my mother, or down you'd go on those bricks. Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh!" and down went she on a chair opposite Angelina, and her apron over her head: for these women who are going to tear the house down and to stand like Mercury on the *débris* (in a Bloomer), with a finger pointing to truth and a toe to futurity, are just two shades more faint-hearted at bottom than the others.

So Eliza and Angelina kept up the bawl with great want of spirit, bursting out in turns, after the manner of strophe and antistrophe, —

"Et ululare pares et *d*espondere paratæ."

Meantime the manofoneideaatatime, Giles, was obeying orders, and going after the bottle specified by Eliza, and had his hand on the door of the housekeeper's room.

"Giles!" screamed the proprietor! He stood petrified. "There is no such thing in my room," said she, with sudden calmness.

Giles returned to the dresser.

The present scene had lately received an addition that made it perfect, — a satirical spectator.

The pantry window which looked into the kitchen was opened by a footman, whose head had been previously seen bobbing wildly up and down as he cleaned his plate.

This footman had admired Eliza, but, outweighed by the solid virtues and limbs of Giles, was furtively looking out for a chance of disturbing the balance.

Eliza and Angelina were now sobbing placidly.

Mr. Giles stretched his legs slowly out before him, and said very slowly, and with really an appearance of reflection, "Now all this here — bobbery — comes from a woman — making up *her* mind — to wear — the — B— ughahah oh, oh! Ugh!"

Eliza had bounced up in a rage and dabbed the paste right over his mouth, nose, eyes, face, and temples. He should have spoken quicker.

It was nearly his death. However, with horrible noises and distortions he got clear of it.

The footman roared with laughter: he thought he never had seen so truly funny a thing done in his life, — none of your vulgar jokes, — "legitimate humor" thought John. (Giles being my rival.) Turning suddenly grave he said: —

"Well, you are drawing it mild, you are, — here's the mistress coming to see who's cat's dead." So saying he slammed the window, and his head went bobbing again over his spoons.

At this announcement histrionics commenced. "Mrs. Primmer, madam," began Eliza, demurely, with a total change of manner, "I'm sure ma'am you would n't take away a poor girl's place that's three thousand miles away from home — all for a word ma'am!"

"You may pack up your box Eliza for you won't sleep in this house," was the grim answer.

"O Mrs. Primmer," remonstrated Eliza, tearfully, "if you have no heart for poor servants, where do you expect to go to?"

"I shall go nowhere," replied the dignitary, "I shall stay here, it's you that shall march." Then, hearing a light step approach, she astonished

them all by suddenly rising into a wild, sonorous recitative.

"I have my mistress's confidence, and will deserve it."

Miss Courtenay stood on the threshold.

Mrs. Primmer's game was not to see her. She intoned a little louder.

"No woman shall stay a day in this house."

"Well I never!" gasped Angelina, looking towards the door.

"Hold your tongue! no woman shall stay a day in this house, who thinks to put on that immoral, ondelicate, ondecent — Ah! ah! ah!" Primmer screamed, put her nose out straight in the air, put on her spectacles and screamed again.

Miss Courtenay stood at the door in a suit of "propria quæ maribus."

CHAPTER III.

"Propria quæ maribus tribuuntur, mascula dicas."

Eton Latin Grammar.

The world up to that moment had never seen so smart a fella * as caused Primmer's recitative to die in a quaver. {h / sh}e stood on the threshold erect yet lithe; the serpentine lines of youthful female beauty veiled yet not disguised in vest and pantaloons of marvellous cut, neat little collar; dapper shoes, and gaiters: delicious purple broadcloth.

"Giles!" groaned Mrs. Primmer, "you may go for what Eliza said. Anybody may do anything now! I nursed her on these knees," whined the poor woman, with the piteous tone that always accompanies this favorite statement.

"Primmer!" said the Courtenay, coldly, "theatrical exhibitions amuse, but do not deceive; be yourself."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Primmer, coldly, dropping her histrionics directly, and taking up her tact.

"Hearing cries of distress from my household, I came to see if I could be of any service to you: what is the matter?"

"If you please, ma'am," put in Eliza, hastily, "it is all along of Mrs. Primmer being so hard upon the Bloomers, ma'am."

A short explanation followed.

Eliza was asked why she had defended this costume.

Eliza, having found such a backer, was fluent in defence of the new costume.

The rest looked unutterable things, but could say nothing.

In the middle of one of her long sentences, her mistress cut her short, congratulated her demurely on her sense, informed her that she wished one of the servants to assist her in a little scheme for recommending the dress; that she should have hesitated to propose it, but, having found one already so disposed, would use her services.

"On my bed you will find — a costume: put it on immediately, and come to me for further instructions." So saying, she vanished with a slight smile.

Eliza watched her departing form with a rueful face. She discovered when too late that she had never for a moment intended to wear the thing, and had only defended it out of contrariness; she moved towards the door like a lamb to sacrifice.

"Ahem!" said Mrs. Primmer, "you can go into the street dressed like a hobbadehoy if you like, Miss Staunton; but, if I might ask a favor, it is that you won't tell the people what house you came out of: because, you see, I come of decent people in the neighborhood that might feel hurt and leave the town, owing to such a thing being seen come out of the house where I am; that 's all, ma'am; and I am a regular attendant on public and family worship."

This was said very politely.

"Well, ma'am," answered Eliza, beginning as politely, but heating so much per sentence. "I don't know

* Observe the female termination.

as Bloomers are so like what you mention, ma'am, as your own gown would be, ma'am, if it was a bit cleaner, ma'am: but whenever I meet a new-married couple coming from church, I'll step up to the bride, and I'll say, 'Mrs. Primmer requests you would be so good as not to put on your nightgown before supper next time — she's turned so devilish modest *all of a sudden.*'"

So saying, Eliza flounced out in a rage, and, her blood being put up, burned now to go through with it.

CHAPTER IV.

Reginald Seymour was a handsome, gentlemanly fellow, heir apparent of the unsuccessful bidder for Courtenay Court.

He had been for six months the declared lover of the heiress; and his sister Harriet, warmly invited by Miss Courtenay, had at length taken advantage of an escort offered by an English family, and was a guest of the *fiancée.*

If Reginald had a fault, it was too strong a consciousness of the antiquity and importance of the Seymours; and, as that was combined with a determination to hand down their name as pure as they had received it, it was a very excusable weakness.

He was perhaps rather more formal and stately than suited his youth.

It was in the dusk of the evening. Harriet Seymour, full dressed, came into a sort of antechamber with a bouquet of choice flowers in her hand, and there encountered Caroline, for whom in fact she was looking. At sight of her friend, Harriet did not at first comprehend: all she realized was that Caroline was not the thing.

"What! not dressed yet, Caroline?" said she, "it is very late."

"I am dressed, dear."

"Why, of course, I see you have some clothes on for fun, — he, he, — but it is to be a ball, dear!"

"My feet will be as unembarrassed as yours, dear!" replied Caroline, quietly.

Harriet gave her the bouquet, and said with much meaning: "Reginald sends you these. Of course you did not know he was returned."

"Of course I did," was the reply; "he is to be here."

Harriet. "O, Reginald loves you, Caroline."

Caroline. "So he pretends."

Harriet. "He loves you with all the force of an honest heart,— and I love you for his sake and your own: give me the privilege of a sister: let me advise you."

Caroline. "With all my heart."

Harriet. "Yes! but advice is apt to be ill received."

Caroline. "That is because it is given hastily and harshly; but true friends like you! and me, — O fie!"

Harriet. "Promise then not to be angry with me."

Caroline. "Certainly; only you must promise not to be angry if I am too silly or self-willed to take it."

Harriet. "I should not be angry, love, though I might be grieved on your own account."

Caroline. "Well, then, dear."

Harriet. "Well, then, dear, — do not receive society in this costume. I will never tell Reginald; and do not you let him know you ever wore it."

Caroline. "But how can I help it, when he is going to see me in it?"

Harriet. "It is for your delicacy, your feminine qualities, he has loved you."

Caroline. "Has he?" (*looking down.*) "Well, those qualities reside in our souls, not our — habiliments."

Harriet. "Not in such habiliments as those. He will be shocked."

Caroline. "No, only surprised a little, he! he!"

Harriet. "He will be grieved, Caroline."

Caroline. "I shall console him."

Harriet (*with color heightening*). "He will be indignant."

Caroline (*with color rising*). "I shall laugh at him."

Harriet. "He will be disgusted."

Caroline. "Ah, — then I shall dismiss him."

Harriet. "I see I speak to no purpose, Miss Courtenay.

Caroline. "To very little, Miss Seymour."

Harriet. "I shall say no more, madam."

Caroline. "You have said enough, madam."

Harriet. "Since you despise my advice, please yourself."

Caroline. "I shall take your advice at present."

Harriet. "But you will *never* be my brother's wife."

Caroline. "Then I shall *always* be mistress in my own house."

Harriet, who was at the door, returned as if to speak, but she was too angry; gave it up, and retired half choking.

A sacred joy filled Caroline's bosom, — she had had the last word!

As she was about to pass out of the room, who should enter hastily but Reginald Seymour? — her back was towards him.

He called to her : "Can you tell me where I shall find Miss Courtenay, sir?"

Caroline bit her lips, but she turned sharply round, and said: "She is in this room, madam!"

"Oh!" said Reginald. He added, "O Caroline!" and looked pained.

Caroline blushed, and if heavenly looks and little female artifice could have softened censure, they were not wanting.

"What beautiful flowers you have sent me!" said she. "See, I threw away my formal bouquet for your *nosegay*."

"You do me honor," said the young gentleman, uneasily.

"Honor! — no! but justice; a single violet from you deserves to be preferred to roses and camellias."

"Dear Caroline! I withdraw, — you are not dressed yet, and people will soon arrive."

Caroline saw there was no real way of escape, so with great external calmness she said sweetly : —

"I am dressed, dear Reginald."

"I beg your pardon," said he, as not understanding her.

"I forgive you," said the sly thing, taking him up, "there are so many who do not see the beauty of — all this: I have promised to wear it tonight," continued she (not allowing him to get in a word), "and to compare it calmly and candidly with other costumes; you will be so amused; and we shall arrive at a real judgment instead of violent prejudices, which you are above; at least I give you credit. I should not admire you so much as I do if I doubted that."

"Caroline!" said the young gentleman, gravely.

"Yes, Reginald!"

"Dear Caroline, do you believe I love you?"

"Better than I deserve, I dare say," said Caroline.

"No! as you deserve. I will not own my love inferior even to your merit. Do you believe that when we are one my life will be devoted to your happiness?"

"I am sometimes goose enough to hope so," murmured Caroline, averting her head.

"Shall you think ill of me then, if, before marriage, I ask a favor, perhaps a sacrifice, of you? I feel I shall not be ungrateful."

"There," thought Caroline, "I am not to wear it, — that is plain."

Reginald continued: "If you wear this dress, you will give me pain beyond any pleasure you can derive."

"Reginald," said the poor girl, "I wish to wear it, — now and then; indeed, I *had* set my heart on making a few, a very few — converts to it; see how pretty it is," (no answer); "but for your sake, when I take it off tonight, I will give it away; and it shall never, never offend any more."

Reginald kissed her hand.

There was a pause.

"Caroline," said he, stammering, "you do not quite understand me; it is to-day I beg you on no account to wear it."

"O, to-day," said she, hastily, "I have promised to wear it."

"I entreat you," said he; "consider; if you once show yourself to people from every part of New York in this costume, what more remains to be done?"

"Reginald! be reasonable," said Caroline, more coldly. "I stand engaged to some sixty persons to wear this dress to-night. I have made you a concession, and with pleasure, because I make it to you. It is your turn now: you must think of me as well as of yourself, dear Reginald. I am afraid you must shut your eyes on me for a few hours: that will spoil all my pleasure; or you must fancy, as many a lover has been able to do, that I consecrate a dress, not that a dress has power to lower me."

"O Caroline, do you value my respect?"

"Yes! and therefore I shall keep my word, and so you will feel sure I shall keep my word to you too, if ever I promise something about" (blushes and smiles) "Love — honor — and obey."

A battle took place in the young man's mind.

He took several strides backwards and forwards.

At last he burst out: "There are feelings too strong to be conquered by our wishes.

"I cannot bear that my wife should do what three fourths of her sex think indelicate. We never differed in opinion before, we never shall again. If we do, be assured I will bow to you. I would yield here if I could: but I cannot. I think you can; if you can, have pity on me, and add one more claim to my life—long gratitude."

The balance trembled: the tears were in Caroline's eyes; her bosom fluttered: when the Demon of Discord inspired her proud nature with this idea.

"He loves his prejudices better than you," said Discord; "and this is tyranny, — coaxing tyranny if you will, but still tyranny."

On this hint spake Caroline.

"I find I have rivals."

"Rivals?"

"In your prejudices! Reginald, neither person nor thing shall ever be my rival. Show me at once which you love with the deeper affection, Mr. Seymour's prejudices, or Caroline Courtenay. I shall wear this dress to-night, — only for a few hours, — consider! you will be here and keep me in countenance, — or you don't love me."

"No! Caroline!" said Reginald, sadly and firmly. "I have spoken; our future life now rests in your hands. I shall not come, — I shall arrange so that if you degrade yourself (I still cling to the hope you will not) I shall hear of it, and leave the country that minute. Were I to *see* it, by Heaven I should leave the world." He said this in great heat, but, recovering himself, said: "Forgive me!" kissed her hand, and went despondently away.

Caroline, on his departure, wished he had gone away in a pet instead of sorrowful; wished he had been her husband to cut the matter short by carrying her in his arms and securing her in his dressing-room till the ball was over; wished she had never seen the Bloomer costume; wished she could hide and cry in an attic till all was over.

On her meditations entered a plump figure with all manner of expressions chasing one another over her countenance: this was Eliza, who courtesied to attract attention, and, failing, presumed that her deportment had not corresponded with her costume: so bowed instead, and ducked, and as a last resource gave a pull at the top of her head.

Caroline. "Well!"

Eliza. "If you please ma'am, — but if you please ma'am am I to say ma'am or sir now ma'am?"

Caroline. "Madam will do for the present."

Eliza. "If you please, ma'am, Kitty the housemaid, that was to wear the short-waisted gown before the company, says she won't put it on for a double dollar."

Caroline. "Promise her four dollars then."

Eliza. "Yes-m."

Caroline. "The girl's mother would have been as loath to wear a long waist."

Eliza. "Yes-m."

Caroline. "And to-morrow morning tell Primmer to discharge her."

Eliza. "Yes-m! Oho," thought Eliza, "then now is the time to trim that old fagot Primmer."

"If you please, ma'am, I have the greatest respect for Mrs. Primmer, because she has been here longer than I have, and is a good servant, ma'am, there's no denying it; but, if you please, 'm, there's no putting Mrs. Primmer out of her turnpike road, as the saying is. She says, if I don't make the jellies and blamonge, she'll make you turn me off, ma'am, now how can I when I've got to learn off all those words you gave me if you please, ma'am, am I to take your orders or Mrs. Primmer's-m?"

Caroline. "Now I must ask you a question, — who are you?"

Eliza. "La, ma'am! I am Eliza, mum! Cook, mum! I make the Guava jelly that you like so, ma'am."

Caroline. "Very well! then, Eliza Cook, for six hours you are my lieutenant here, and queen in the kitchen; give your orders, and discharge Primmer, and every man and woman in the house that disobeys you, and I'll confirm all you do."

Eliza. "Yes-m" (*with flashing eyes*).

Caroline. "And, if you abuse your authority, you shall be the first victim!"

Eliza. "Yes-m" (*crestfallen*).

"There," said Eliza to herself, as she absconded with a modest reverence, "I've been and given you a dig in your old ribs with my rolling-pin, Mrs. Primmer."

"Until to-day," thought her mistress, "a look from me was law, and now every creature high and low thwarts and opposes me, — ever since I put these vile things on."

Now some would have carried the reasoning out thus — ergo — take these vile things off!

But this sweet creature never dreamed of that path of inference.

"Of this there can be but one consequence," said she, "I shall do it ten times the more."

She then burst out crying; which was an unfair advantage the Bloomer took over poor Reginald; for after a shower of tears pretty flowers are invigorated.

Rat a tat! tat a tat, tat! tat! tat! tat!

The guests arrived. We shall only particularize one: Mr. Fitzpatrick, an Irish gentleman, who had retained the delightful qualities of his nation, and rubbed off its ignorance and down its prejudices.

Handsome, gay, and, though not varnished, polished, he was as charming a companion as either a man or woman could desire.

Fitzpatrick's flattery was agreeable to the ladies; it was so very sincere, — he really saw *en beau* both them and all their ways.

At sight of Miss Courtenay in a Bloomer, he was ravished.

"O Miss Caroline, but that's a beautiful costoome ye've invented; the few of us that's left standing will fall to-night: ye've no conscience at all."

"I did not invent the hideous thing; it is Bloomer."

"Bloomer? ye're joking. What! is it this that they've been running down? O the haythen barbarians!!!! Ye were a rainbow at the last ball, but now ye're a sunbeam, — ye'll not be for dancing the first dance with an uncouth Celt?"

"You will not be for waiting till the seventh, Mr. Fitzpatrick!"

"Is it only six ye're engaged? O but I'm in luck to-night."

Mr. Fitzpatrick had been for some time puzzled which he loved most, — Harriet Seymour or Caroline Courtenay; but last week he had decided in favor of the latter, without prejudice to the former.

The dancing was kept up with some spirit for two hours; and then Caroline's associates were observed to steal out and to make for various apartments in her very large house on the doors of which their respective names were written in chalk.

Results, not processes, are for the public eye.

Suffice it to say at present, in excuse of Caroline's obstinacy, that she had been at no small trouble and expense to carry out her little idea. She had also read, drawn, composed, and written. Others that saw the work had given her credit for some talent, great talent of course they said; and she was mortified to think her lover would not give her this opportunity of showing him her wit, on which she secretly valued herself more than on her beauty.

A polka concluded. A tide of servants poured in. A semicircle of seats sprung up. A pulpit rose like an exhalation, and, almost before her guests could seat themselves, Caroline was a lecturer wearing over her Bloomer a B. C. L. gown from Oxford, and the four-cornered cap of that University on her head.

L'Effrontée! Of whom think you she had borrowed this two days before? Of Reginald!

The optimist Fitzpatrick was enchanted.

She was more beautiful in this than even in a Bloomer. And indeed it became her; the gravity of the dress made a keen contrast with her archness. She was like a vivid flower springing unexpectedly from some time-stained wall, — dancing, vanity, wit, pique at Reginald, and the flattery of others, made her cheek flush, her eyes flash.

"Ahem!" said she, in the dry-as-dust tone of a lecturer. "Ladies and gentlemen: as you will have to bear with many costumes this evening, permit me to begin with this: —

"I wear it, ladies and gentlemen, because it is supposed to confer a right to be tedious, ahem!

"I am here to attack two principal errors.

"One is that such fashions as embarrass the limbs are of a nature to last upon earth.

"The other is that pantaloons are essentially masculine, and sweeping robes feminine.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we women can only predict the Future by examining the Past, — moles and rabbits may have some other way, though I think not. Eliza,

> 'Call back past facts with lessons fraught
> To teach us, — if we can be taught.'"

Eliza opened the door.

Miss Spilman the musical associate, splashed a magnificent chord on the piano, and in sailed Queen Elizabeth! I mean a lady in the exact costume in which that queen went into the city to return thanks for the destruction of the Spanish Armada.

Set a stomacher three feet long between two monstrous jelly bags, upon a bloated bell, and there you have this queen and her successor in New York.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the lecturer.

"Common sense fell flatter than Spain, the day Royalty appeared thus!

"Could a duck make a doll, this would be the result.

"Yet this costume, as much admired once as ours is now, is only the principle of our own carried a step further: at the head of our principle is the sack, in which rustics jump at a fair, — next comes Queen Bess, and then come we.

"With us motion is *embarrassed.*

"With Queen Bess motion is *impeded.*

"With the sack motion is *obstructed.*

"In rational and therefore permanent costumes motion is free, — Vide Time and the World."

A CHORD.

With a multiplicity of affectation in came a courtier the point of whose shoes touched his knees, and he seemed proud of them.

No remark was made: this thing spoke for itself.

Next a noise was heard, and with infinite difficulty a lady was squeezed in who wore the genuine hoop.

Two short-waisted ladies came in.

Everybody laughed at the sight of them.

Her success taking this form, one of them burst out a crying: this was Kitty, who was instantly attempted to be consoled (as the papers phrase it) by Mr. Fitzpatrick; he told her nothing could disguise her comeliness; and really thought so at the moment.

This dress set people talking; those who had worn it confessed to the younger ones that they had thought it beautiful, and had anticipated the destruction of Nature as soon as the demise of this phase of the unnatural.

Then followed jigot sleeves.

Two chords were struck on the piano, and Miss Courtenay resumed her lecture thus: —

RECITATIVE.

"All these good people when they were here thought they must be here forever.
Or as long as men and women and Primrose Hill and the Mississippi River.
But they proved more like the flower than the hill that bears its name.
And, instead of the great Mississippi, they were bubbles floating down that same."

SONG.

"Such fashions are like poppies spread:
You seize the flower, the bloom is fled:
Or like a snow-flake on a river,
A moment seen then gone forever."

"We have shown you the costumes that could not stand the shock of time; you shall now see what sort of costumes have stood the brunt of centuries: compare the Bloomers with each in turn, and you will be on the path of truth."

Armenian, Polish, and Sicilian peasants were then introduced, whose limbs were free enough, goodness knows: they ranged themselves in a line opposite their stiff competitors, and a Bloomer took up the recitative.

"All these, unlike the Bloomer, confine the limbs and make the ribs to crack.
All those, like Bloomers, free the mind, the body, and the back.
So hail to great Amelia, who takes a sex out of a sack."

SONG.

"For grace is motion unconfined,
Like rippling sea or sweeping wind,
Free as the waves of yellow corn
That bows to greet the breezy morn."

The applause had but just subsided, when a clear, rich, quaint voice arose, and to the surprise of the company trilled forth the following stanza to some fossil tune, — Chevy chase, we really believe.

"The ass with four legs has the wit
None of those four to tether,
But there 's a greater ass with two
That ties those two together."

While the others sat aghast at this stanza, Fitzpatrick was gratified. "Now that was like honey dropping from the comb," observed he.

"Now you know, Mr. Fitzpatrick, it was like vinegar distilling from a cruet," replied Miss Courtenay.

"There *was* an agreeable acidulation, compared with yours, Miss Courtenay, but, in itself, delicious!" retorted the optimist.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the modern Portia, "the first head of my lecture is before you. I am now to prove that pantaloons are not necessarily masculine, nor long skirts feminine."

On this entered two Persian women in gorgeous costume and very spacious trousers.

They salaamed to Caroline and the Bloomers, but seemed staggered by

the other figures. Whilst they whispered and eyed the company, Caroline lectured.

"Ladies, this costume is worn by half the well-dressed women in the world; and we must not flatter ourselves we are more feminine than Mussulwomen. On the contrary, these pantalooned females practise a reserve, compared with which the modesty of Europe is masculine impudence."

A Lady. "Make them speak. I don't think they are women at all."

Caroline. "They are women, I assure you, Miss White; for one of them has just borrowed a pin of me."

Miss W. "Then why don't they talk?"

Caroline. "He! he! the inference is just. They are going to speak unless they have forgotten all I —"

Zuleima. "They *have* feet and even legs. O Holy Prophet, here are women who muffle their feet, and reveal their necks to the gaze of man."

Fatima. "What dirt has this people eaten? Can this be the great Frank nation whose ships subdue every sea, and whose wisdom and probity are such that the evil spirit himself cannot get the better of them in making-bargains? are these sea-kings sprung from lunatics, who hide their feet which were made for show and motion, and reveal their faces and necks, which is unlawful?"

Zuleima. "Daughter of the Commander of the Faithful, your slave has an idea!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Fatima (*startled*). "Bismillah! In the name of the Prophet, let me hear it."

Zuleima. "Three revolutions of the moon are completed since we sailed in ships from Istanboul: in the mean time Sheitan has doubtless obtained permission to derange this people's intellects, that so they may be converted to the true faith, the faith of Islam. Thus, their brains being confounded, they muffle their feet and reveal their necks without shame to the gaze of man. Your slave has spoken!!"

Fatima. "It is well spoken: it is also a nation which sups on opium, and drinks hot wine as a camel sucks water in the desert. We will therefore sit on ottomans and laugh."

Zuleima. "Bechishm! on my eyes be it."

Fatima. "Seven days."

Zuleima. "And seven nights."

Fatima. "At these children."

Zuleima. "Of burnt fathers."

Fatima and Zuleima. "We will laugh —

Seven days
And seven nights
At these children
Of burnt fathers!"

They then sat like little tailors on two ottomans opposite each other, and, nodding like mandarins, laughed mechanically, as became people who were going to make seven nights of it.

Caroline. "Adsis, O Cato! Call him, Eliza."

Eliza. "If you please, 'um, would you say them words again."

Caroline. "Adsis, O Cato."

Eliza. "Assist us, old King Cole!"

Cato swept in with a magnificent toga.

"Adsum," said he, "quis me vocat?"

Caroline. "Be pleased, sir, to tell us which are the most masculine and which the most feminine of these souls."

Cato folded his arms and took three antique strides. "These cackling creatures," said he, "are Persian women, this" (Eliza) "is a native I believe of some barbarous country not yet under the dominion of Rome."

Eliza. "Nor don't mean to."

Cato. "These with black plaster stuck to them are of the genus simii, or apes. The rest with togæ but no beards are, I suppose, of the Epicene gender, — dismiss me."

A CHORD.

Cato. "Abeo" (*chord*) "excedo" (*chord*) "evado" (*chord*) "erumpo."

Four strides, one for each verb, took him out with a sharp and pleasing effect.

This ended the lecture; and a dance of all ages and climes was proposed.

"I can't hop, as you do nowadays," remonstrated the hoop. "I was taught to dance."

"Grace was in all my steps," said the courtier.

Said Caroline: "Dance in your own way, dress in your own way, and let your neighbors have their way; that is the best way!"

A dance was then played with no very marked accent; and mighty pleasant it was to see couples polking, couples gavotting with all the superstition of antiquated grace,—and waltzes and jigs and tarantula: the sanctified solemnity with which polite people frisk was for this once exchanged for sly gravity and little bursts of merriment. BOOM!

A gun at sea.

The great steamer was starting for England.

It was a brilliant moonlight. There was a general move to the supper-room, which had four windows looking seaward.

One old lady lingered a moment to convey to her host her opinion of the lecture.

"You are a very clever young lady! your lecture was very ingenious."

"I am fortunate in your friendly consideration of it, madam," said Caroline.

"The women in trousers were funny!"

"If it gave my friends a smile, Miss Ruth."

"It will make Bloomers, I believe. It was as good as a play, Miss Courtenay; and I shall never enter your house again, madam!" With this conclusion, Miss Ruth became a vertical rod and marched off.

The next moment a servant brought Caroline a letter; she opened it. A smile with which she was listening to Fitzpatrick's admiration became a stone smile, as her eyes fixed themselves on the paper. She gave a cry like one wounded, and, stretching out her hands with a tender helplessness that at once gave the lie to her dress, she sank insensible into Mr. Fitzpatrick's arms.

The steamboat was taking Reginald past her window to England.

CHAPTER V.

SEVERAL months after this event, a young gentleman was seated in a study, book in hand, but by no effort could he give his mind to the book: he sighed; turned the leaves, and gave it up in despair, — this was Reginald Seymour, whose offended dignity and delicacy had borne him stiffly up for five months, but could support him no longer.

He had now had leisure to remember the many high qualities of her whose one fault he had thought unpardonable. He had flung away a jewel for a single flaw: jewels are rare: he began to think he had been a fool, and to know he was wretched.

What was to be done? he had been silent so long, that now he was ashamed to write, and when he had with a great struggle determined to make the first overtures, a letter from his sister had given him a mysterious hint that it would now be too late to attempt an accommodation.

Reginald was not one of those who babble their griefs, and cure themselves in ten days by tormenting all their friends.

He was silent, distracted, reserved.

His own family, who guessed the cause of his low spirits, respected him too much to approach the subject, or to let strangers into the secret.

They permitted him to be miserable in peace.

He thanked them in his heart, and availed himself to the full of their kind permission.

He took possession of a room whose windows looked on Courtenay Court,

and in that room, in the company of the immortal dead, — *il s'ennuyait.*

One of these painful reveries was interrupted by a visitor, an old gentleman in black gaiters and a white head; it was the Reverend James Tremaine, Perpetual Curate of Conyton. An old and true friend of both houses, and Reginald's tutor for many years, Mr. Tremaine had not seen his depression without interest. He was acquainted with the cause. The Seymours had few secrets from him. Certain features in every story vary according to the side we hear it from; and Mr. Tremaine secretly congratulated Reginald on his escape from a strong-minded woman; he called, not to keep his pupil's mind fixed on the subject, but to divert him from it.

After noticing with regret the young man's depression, he asked permission to be his physician.

"I see," said he, "what it is, you want some fixed intellectual pursuit; will you allow me to recommend you one?"

"As many as you like, dear sir," said Reginald, "for I am wearied of my life. I have nothing to do," added he, thinking he was throwing dust in his mentor's eyes.

Mr. Tremaine took his cue, and then and there proposed to his late pupil's attention an interesting pursuit, — suited to that part of the country, — Geology. "It is a science," said he, "which lifts you out of this ignorant present, and transports you into various stages of this earth's existence; you learn on its threshold what a mushroom in this world's great story is the author of the Pyramids.

"You find that the earth was red-hot for millions of years, and spouted liquid stone like a whale, — in that stone look for no signs of vegetation, and still fewer of life. Then for millions of years the upper crust has been cooling, and water depositing rubbish which has coagulated into stone; and in this stratified stone you shall find things that lived or grew very late in the world's history, in fact within a few million years of mammoths, who preceded man by a few thousand years only; at least I think so, since the flesh of mammoths has been found in ice in our own day."

The old gentleman then hinted, with a twinkle of the eye, that this science has also its prose; that, by breaking stones with iron in them, men have repaired their shattered fortunes; that coal, silver, iron, and even gold are as common as dirt, only not quite so superficial; and that geology, really mastered, would teach its proficient the signs of their presence, that it would be better to circulate over the face of Devonshire with hammer and book, than to be a prey to weariness without the excuse of work.

Mr. Tremaine had not observed what we have, that snobs in fustian jackets, without a single hard word to their backs, find all the gold and all the coal that is found, and science finds the *crustaceorii dun culæ.*

As for botany, Mr. Tremaine recommended it only as a relaxation of the more useful study; at the same time he hinted it was amusing to be able to classify plants, not by their properties, but their petals, and to call everything by its long name that belongs to twenty other things as well, instead of knowing each by a peculiar title, as the vulgar unscientific do.

"O, *le plaisant projet!*" exclaims my reader, "he knows the boy is in love, and prescribes geology and botany."

Well, is not one folly best cured by another? But is this sort of thing folly, especially in a youth born to fortune?

Experience is our only safe guide in all things, — and experience proves that geology and botany are roads to happiness.

Other things are constantly tried in vain, — these seldom fail.

Ambition is raging agitation followed by bitter disappointment.

Wit, an unruly engine, recoils on him that plays it.

Politics, love, theology, — art, are full of thorns; but when you see a man perched like a crow on a rock, chipping it, you see a happy dog. You who are on the lookout for beauty find irregular features or lack-lustre dolls, — you who love wit are brained with puns or ill-nature, the two forms of wit that exist out of books: but the hammerist can jump out of his gig at any turn of the road and find that which his soul desires; the meanest stone a boy throws at a robin is millions of years older than the Farnese Hercules, and has a history and a sermon to it.

Stones are curious things. If a man is paid for breaking them he is wretched: but if he can bring his mind to do it gratis he is at the summit of content.

With these men life is a felicitous dream, — they are not subject to low spirits; they smile away their human day; and when they are to die they are content. Is it because they can take anything easy by giving it a hard name? is the grave to them a cretaceous or argillaceous or ferrugineous bed?

No! It is because their hobbies have been innocent; and other men's hobbies are often full of vice.

They have broken stones, while egotists have been breaking human hearts.

Mr. Tremaine was enlarging on such topics with more eloquence and method than I, when his patient became animated with a sudden expression of surprise, hope, joy.

He looked out of the window.

The old gentleman looked too. "Ah" cried he, "I see! Yes! Reginald! that is better than science and beyond the power of art."

"Yes," said Reginald.

"That glorious breadth of golden sunlight that streams across that foliage" continued the *savant.*

"Sunshine and leaves!" cried Reginald "it is something of more importance I am looking at."

"More importance than sunshine," said the old gentleman, faintly.

"Yes! see! the smoke from those chimneys!!"

Mr. Tremaine looked, and Courtenay Court was smoking from a dozen chimneys at once. He was taken off his guard.

"She must be come home," said he, "or coming."

Reginald seized him by the hand.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Tremaine was right, Caroline was expected at Courtenay Court. The next day she arrived, bringing Miss Seymour, who went to her father's house.

They had been escorted across the water by Mr. Fitzpatrick, but he remained in town. Before they left New York this gentleman had declared himself Caroline's professed admirer. Caroline asked him with some archness which he loved best, her or Miss Seymour. The question staggered him for a moment, — but he said, "Can you ask?" Cross-examined however, he was brought to this, that he liked Caroline a shade better than Harriet.

During the voyage home Mr. Fitzpatrick lost a portion of his gayety, and was seen at times to be grave and perplexed, — novel phenomenon.

Harriet Seymour and Caroline had got over their tiff, and indeed Harriet for months past had sided rather with her friend than her brother. "Caroline was wrong," said she; "but Reginald was more wrong. He ought to have forgiven a woman a caprice." Harriet therefore spent the evening of her arrival at home, but early next morning she rode over to Courtenay Court to bear her friend company. She was the more eager to lend her her countenance because others were so hard upon her. For the evening of her arrival Caroline

was discussed at Seymour Hall. The old people, including Mr. Tremaine, spoke of her with horror. Tomboy, vixen, and even strong-minded woman, from which Heaven defend males! They congratulated themselves and Reginald on his escape from her. Reginald maintained a dogged silence. But when Harriet stoutly defended his late sweetheart, and declared that her faults were only on the surface, he cast a look of gratitude at her, that she caught and comprehended. Nor was her defence quite lost on others. Mr. Tremaine asked her quietly: "Has Miss Courtenay really anything good about her?" "Judge for yourself" replied Harriet, with a toss of the head; "call on her, — she is your parishioner."

"Humph! I don't like strong-minded women; they say she can swim into the bargain; but I certainly will call on her."

To return, Caroline and Harriet were walking in the grounds of Courtenay Court, at some distance from the house: Harriet was lionizing the mistress, showing her her beauties, the famous old yew-tree, the narrow but deep water that meandered through her grounds, and each admired view and nook. It was charming; and both ladies did loud admiration, and did not care a button for it all.

Harriet. "Is Mr. Fitzpatrick coming to-day?"

Caroline. "I don't know. What a curious bridge! It looks like a long gate, — shall we cross it?"

Harriet. "Not for the world, — the water is ever so deep."

Caroline. "I do not mean cross the water, only the bridge."

Harriet. "But see how crazy it is: the wood is so old. Nobody has lived here ever so long: and then it is so hard to keep on it too."

Caroline looked wistfully at the primitive bridge. "If I had my Bloomer on I would soon be over it," said she; "but this appendage would catch my feet and draggle in the water at every step."

Harriet implored her friend never to mention that word again. "Bloomer! It is the cause why we are all unhappy."

"What, are you unhappy? What about? O, he will be here to-day, dear, — ten to one."

"Who?"

"Mr. Fitzpatrick!"

"Mr. Fitzpatrick is your lover, not mine," said Harriet, coloring all over.

"So he is: I forgot! O, look at the tail of your gown, — three straws, two sticks, and such a long brier."

Harriet. "Put your foot on it, dear! These lawyers are the plague of this county."

Caroline. "Lawyers?"

Harriet. "I forgot, you don't know our country terms: we call these long briers lawyers, because when once they get hold of you — "

Caroline. "I understand. All to be avoided by a little Bloomer."

Harriet. "Now, Caroline, don't! I wish the woman had never been born! Let us go into the shade."

An observer of the sex might have noticed the same languor and the same restlessness in both these ladies, though one was Yankee and one English.

At last they fell into silence. It was Caroline who broke this silence.

"Nobody comes to welcome me, or even sends. How hospitable these British are! If I had quarrelled with any one in their own country, and then they came to mine, I should be generous: I should make that an excuse for holding out the hand, and being friends any way, if I could be nothing more. But the people here are not of my mind. All the worse for them. Much I care. I shall go and see where they have buried my father (I don't believe he would have died if he had not come here), and then I shall go back home across the water to my country, where men know how to quarrel, ay, and fight too, and then drop it when it is done with."

Thus spake the Yankee girl. The English girl colored up: but she did

not answer back, except by turning brimming eyes and a look of gentle reproach on her.

On this, partly because she was unhappy, partly because this mild look pricked her great though wayward heart, the Yankee girl began to cry bitterly.

On this, the English girl flung her arms round the Yankee girl's neck, and cried with her.

"Dearest, he loves you still."

"Still, — he never loved me, Harriet! O no, he never loved me! Oh! oh!"

"You forget, — I have been home — I have seen him. He is pale — he is sad."

"That is a c-c-comfort, — I w-w-wish he was at d-d-death's door!"

"He is far more unhappy than you are."

"I am so glad, I don't believe it."

"You may believe it. I have seen it."

At this moment a servant was seen approaching: he came up, touched his hand to Caroline with a world of obsequiousness, and informed her the parson had called to see her and was in the drawing-room.

"The parson?"

"The Reverend Mr. Tremaine, miss."

"A great friend of our family," explained Harriet.

"Ah, tell me all about him as we go along."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Tremaine. "Will she receive me in a Bloomer?"

Harriet. "I don't know. I hope not. She was decent a minute ago."

Tremaine. "Perhaps she has gone to put one on."

Harriet gave a start, and had a misgiving, Caroline being a devil. "Heaven forbid," she cried, "I will go and see."

The next minute a young lady of singular beauty and grace glided into the room. She was dressed richly, but very plainly. Mr. Tremaine looked at her with surprise. "Are you Miss Courtenay?"

She smiled sweetly and told him she was Miss Courtenay. She added that Mr. Tremaine was no stranger to her, — she had often heard of him and his virtues, in happier days. After that she thanked him for being the first to welcome her home.

"We shall all feel flattered at your calling it home, Miss Courtenay: we must try and keep you here after that."

In about ten minutes the intelligent young beauty had not only dissolved Mr. Tremaine's prejudices against her, but had substituted a tolerably strong prejudice in her favor.

"This quiet, lady-like, dignified, gentle, amiable, beautiful young woman a tomboy?" said he to himself. "I don't believe it. It surpasses belief: it is false."

There was a pause.

"Miss Courtenay," began the old gentleman, "your late father during the short time he was among us gained the respect of the whole country. I cannot help thinking you will be his successor in our esteem as well as in Courtenay Court."

Miss Courtenay bowed with quiet dignity.

"The worst of it is, we are an old-fashioned people here in Devonshire. We are strait-laced, perhaps too strait-laced — ahem! in short, shall I be presuming too far on our short acquaintance if (pray give me credit for friendly motives) I ask permission to put you a question? But no, — when I look at you, — it is impossible."

"What is impossible, sir?"

"That you can ever have — by the by, they say you can swim, Miss Courtenay"; and the old gentleman colored a bit.

"A little, not worth boasting of," replied Caroline, modestly. "I think

I could make shift to swim across this room, if the sea was in it."

"O, no farther than that? well, there is not much harm in that. But they do say you have done us the honor, ahem, to wear male habiliments. Is that true?"

"Indeed, Mr. Tremaine, I have. Let — me — see! I think it was at a fancy ball; in my own house; at New York." The words were said with assumed carelessness and candor.

"What, on no other occasion?"

"On no other public occasion. Why?"

"Then really I think too much has been made of it. But you are said to advocate the Bloomer costume."

"I have often advocated it in words, sir, but wearing it is a different matter, you know."

"Very different, very different indeed," said Tremaine, hastily.

"I could not help advocating it, its adversaries argued so weakly against it. Shall I repeat their arguments, and my own?"

"If you please."

Caroline then, with the calm indifference of a judge, stated the usual arguments pro and con, and did not fail to dwell upon the trousers of Eastern women. Mr. Tremaine took her up: "There is a flaw in your reasoning, I think," said he. "Those Eastern women distinguish themselves from men by a thick veil. They all wear a thick veil.

"It appears to me that the true argument against Bloomer has never been laid before you. It is this. In every civilized nation the entire sex is distinguished by some marked costume. But Bloomer proposes that one third of the women should be at variance with the other two thirds."

"O no, sir, she is for dressing them all in Bloomer."

"No. Excuse me: how would old women and fat women look in a Bloomer? how would young matrons look at that period when a woman is most a woman? No; the dress of women must clearly be some dress that becomes all women, at all times and occasions of life. There are plenty of boys of sixteen or seventeen, who could be dressed as women and eclipse all the women in a ball-room: but it would be indelicate and *unmanly;* you, with your youthful symmetrical figure, could eclipse most young men in their own habiliments: but it would be indelicate and *unwomanly.* Forgive me, — I distress you."

"No, sir, but you convince me, and that is new to me. I admit this argument at once, and so I would have done six months ago; but no one had the intelligence to put the matter to me so," said the sly thing.

"You seem to be a very reasonable young lady."

"I try to be: it is the only merit I have."

"There I must contradict you again, and stoutly. Well, then, since the Bloomer difficulty is despatched, let me have the honor and happiness of reconciling an honorable young man to the most charming young lady I have met with this many a day."

The charming young lady froze directly.

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, sir. But the difference between Mr. Seymour and myself lies deeper than this paltry dress, — lies too deep for you to cure. The Bloomer was a mere pretext. Mr. Seymour did not love me."

"Excuse me. I know better."

"When we love people, we forgive their faults. We forgive their virtues even."

Mr. Tremaine looked at her with some surprise! The Devonshire ladies had not tongues so pointed as the fair Yankees.

"He did love you; he does love you!"

"No, Mr. Tremaine! no! Was that a fault for any one, who really loved me, to quarrel out and out with a spoiled child for?" Here two tears, the one real, the other crocodile, ran down her lovely cheeks and did the poor old gentleman's business entirely.

"He deserves to be hanged," cried he, jumping up in great heat. "Young fool! but he does love you, tenderly, sincerely! He has never been happy since. He never will be happy, till you are reconciled to him. He is waiting in great anxiety for my return. I shall tell him to ride over here, and just go down — on — his — knees to you and ask your forgiveness. If he does, will you forgive him?"

"I will try, sir," said Caroline, doubtfully; "but he owes much to his advocate, and so you must tell him."

"I shall be vain enough to tell him so, you may depend"; and away went Mr. Tremaine, Caroline's devoted champion through thick and thin from this hour. As he rode away, zeal and benevolence shining through him, Caroline said dryly to herself: "I am your friend for life, old boy." Harriet came in and heard the news. She was delighted. Reginald will be here as fast as his horse's feet can carry him. Mr. Tremaine is all-powerful in our house.

"So I concluded from what you told me," said Caroline, demurely, "and I — hem — will you excuse me for half an hour?"

"Yes, dear, you will find me on the lawn."

Full three quarters of an hour had elapsed, and Harriet was beginning to wonder what had become of her friend, when a musical laugh rang behind her. She turned round and beheld a sight that made her scream with terror and dismay, — there stood Caroline in propria quæ maribus, as bold as brass.

CHAPTER VIII.

The face of uneasy defiance Caroline got up, when Harriet faced her, was truly delicious. "It is all over," gasped Harriet, "you are incurable."

"He loves me," explained Caroline. "When I felt like giving in, I did n't think he loved me."

Harriet made no reply. She marched off stiffly. The Bloomer followed, and tried to appease her by reminding her how hard it was to give in as long as a chance of victory remained. "Hard? it is impossible, — it hurts!" No answer.

"It was all that dear old man's fault, for letting out that he loves me still, and is unhappy: so then he is in my power, and I can't give in now; and I won't. No! let us see whether it is me or my clothes he loves. Ah! ah. O my dear girl, here he comes! let me get behind you. O dear, I wish I had n't!"

Sure enough Reginald was coming down to the other side of the stream.

Caroline got half behind Harriet.

Reginald came along the bridge to join them.

"I wish it would break down," said Caroline, "and then I 'd run home, and I know what I would do."

The words were out of her mouth and no more, when some portion of the rotten wood gave way, and splash went Reginald into the water. Harriet screamed. Caroline laughed; but her laughter was soon turned to dismay. Reginald sank. He came up and struggled towards the wood-work, but in vain: the current had carried him a yard or two from it, and even that small space he could not recover. He was too proud to cry for help, but he was drowning.

"He can't swim," cried Caroline, and she dashed into the stream like a water-spaniel: in two strokes she was beside him and seized him by the hair. One stroke took her to the remnant of the bridge; "Lay hold of that, Reginald," she cried; he obeyed, and while she swam ashore he worked along the wooden bridge to the bank. The moment she saw him safe she began to laugh again, and then what does my lady do but sets off running home full pelt before he could say a word to her? He followed her, crying, "Caroline, Caroline!" It was no use, she was in her Bloomer, and ran like a doe.

"O Reginald, go home and change your clothes," cried the tender Harriet.

"What, go home, before I have thanked my guardian angel, — my beloved?"

"Your guardian angel must change her clothes (they are spoiled forever now, that is one comfort), and you must change yours, — you will catch your death."

"At least tell her she shall wear what she pleases — tell her — "

"I will tell her nothing; come and tell it her yourself in dry clothes; frightening me so!"

Reginald ran to the stables, got his horse, galloped home; dressed himself and galloped back, and came into Caroline's drawing-room, open-mouthed: "Wear what you like, dear Caroline; why, where is the Bloomer gone? you 're in a gown! No matter — forgive me — O forgive me — I have been ungrateful once — I never will again, my beloved — what, did I not owe you enough before, that you must save my life? O Caroline! one word! can the devotion of a life restore me the treasure I once had and trifled with?" Then he fell to kissing her hands and her gown.

Then she, seeing him quite overcome, turned all woman.

"Reginald," she murmured, and sank upon his neck, all her archness dissolving for one sacred moment in tears and love.

"What did you say about Bloomer, Reginald, dear?"

"I said you should wear whatever you liked, sweet one."

"O, then we are never to agree; for I mean to wear whatever you like."

This was "the way to take her," one of that sort.

They are to be made slaves of just as easily as the hen-hearted ones. But ye must not show them the chain.

Mr. Fitzpatrick came in the afternoon.

Caroline. "Mr. Fitzpatrick, will you come here?"

Fitzpatrick. "I will." N. B. An Irishman always consents, and never says "Yes."

Caroline (*with a twinkle in her eye*). "Will you do me a favor?"

Fitz. "I will."

Carol. "Do you see that lady sitting there?" (*Harriet.*)

Fitz. "I do" (*coloring*).

Carol. "Go and marry her." And she gave him a push that seemed less than a feather, but somehow it propelled Fitz all across the room and sent him down on his knees before Harriet. There were only these three in the room.

Mr. Tremaine married two couples in one day: Reginald and Caroline, Fitzpatrick and Harriet. I ought to explain to those who have not seen it that during the voyage Fitz had discovered it was Harriet he loved a shade the best of the two.

At the wedding breakfast, arrayed in white and adorned with wreaths, both the Yankee and the English beauty, were intolerably lovely. No one seemed more conscious of this double fact than Fitz. Caroline observed his looks and said to him confidentially: "Would n't you like to have married both ladies now? tell the truth!!!!"

"Indeed and I would," replied the candid Celt, unconscious of any satire in the question.

America takes two hundred thousand English every year: we have got this one Yankee in return, and we mean to keep her.

A year after they had been married, she wanted to give her Bloomer to one of the stable boys.

"What, the dress you saved my life in?" cried Reginald. "I would not part with it to a prince for the price of a king's ransom."

Lads and lasses, this story is what I have called it, a *jeu d'esprit:* written for your amusement, and intended not to improve you, instruct you, or elevate your morals. Receive it so! and, when next we meet, *majora canamus!*

THE BOX TUNNEL.

A FACT.

THE BOX TUNNEL.

THE 10.15 train glided from Paddington, May 7, 1847. In the left compartment of a certain first-class carriage were four passengers; of these, two were worth description. The lady had a smooth, white, delicate brow, strongly marked eyebrows, long lashes, eyes that seemed to change color, and a good-sized delicious mouth, with teeth as white as milk. A man could not see her nose for her eyes and mouth, her own sex could and would have told us some nonsense about it. She wore an unpretending grayish dress, buttoned to the throat, with lozenge-shaped buttons, and a Scotch shawl that agreeably evaded the responsibility of color. She was like a duck, so tight her plain feathers fitted her; and there she sat, smooth, snug, and delicious, with a book in her hand and a *soupçon* of her snowy wrist just visible as she held it. Her opposite neighbor was what I call a good style of man, — the more to his credit, since he belonged to a corporation that frequently turns out the worst imaginable style of young man. He was a cavalry officer aged twenty-five. He had a mustache, but not a repulsive one; not one of those sub-nasal pig-tails, on which soup is suspended like dew on a shrub; it was short, thick, and black as a coal. His teeth had not yet been turned by tobacco smoke to the color of tobacco juice, his clothes did not stick to nor hang on him, they sat on him; he had an engaging smile, and, what I liked the dog for, his vanity, which was inordinate, was in its proper place his heart, not in his face, jostling mine and other people's, who have none: — in a word, he was what one oftener hears of than meets, a *young gentleman*. He was conversing in an animated whisper with a companion, a fellow-officer, — they were talking about, what it is far better not to do, women. Our friend clearly did not wish to be overheard, for he cast, ever and anon, a furtive glance at his fair *vis-à-vis* and lowered his voice. She seemed completely absorbed in her book, and that reassured him. At last the two soldiers came down to a whisper, and in that whisper (the truth must be told) the one who got down at Slough, and was lost to posterity, bet ten pounds to three, that he who was going down with us to Bath and immortality, would not kiss either of the ladies opposite upon the road. "Done! Done!" Now I am sorry a man I have hitherto praised should have lent himself, even in a whisper, to such a speculation: but "nobody is wise at all hours," not even when the clock is striking five-and-twenty; and you are to consider his profession, his good looks, and the temptation, — ten to three.

After Slough the party was reduced to three: at Twyford one lady dropped her handkerchief; Captain Dolignan fell on it like a tiger and returned it like a lamb; two or three words were interchanged on that occasion. At Reading the Marlborough of our tale made one of the safe investments of that day; he bought a "Times" and a "Punch"; the latter was full of steel-pen thrusts and wood-*cuts*. Val-

or and beauty deigned to laugh at some inflated humbug or other punctured by Punch. Now laughing together thaws our human ice; long before Swindon it was a talking match, — at Swindon who so devoted as Captain Dolignan, — he handed them out, — he souped them, — he tough-chickened them, — he brandied and cochinealed* one, and he brandied and burnt-sugared the other; on their return to the carriage, one lady passed into the inner compartment to inspect a certain gentleman's seat on that side the line.

Reader, had it been you or I, the beauty would have been the deserter, the average one would have stayed with us till all was blue, ourselves included; not more surely does our slice of bread and butter, when it escapes from our hand, revolve it ever so often, alight face downwards on the carpet. But this was a bit of a fop, Adonis, dragoon, — so Venus remained in *tête-à-tête* with him. You have seen a dog meet an unknown female of his species; how handsome, how *empressé*, how expressive he becomes: such was Dolignan after Swindon, and, to do the dog justice, he got handsomer and handsomer; and you have seen a cat conscious of approaching cream, — such was Miss Haythorn; she became demurer and demurer: presently our Captain looked out of window and laughed; this elicited an inquiring look from Miss Haythorn. "We are only a mile from the Box Tunnel." — "Do you always laugh a mile from the Box Tunnel?" said the lady.

"Invariably."

"What for?"

"Why! hem! it is a gentleman's joke."

"O, I don't mind its being silly, if it makes me laugh." Captain Dolignan, thus encouraged, recounted to Miss Haythorn the following: "A lady and her husband sat together going through the Box Tunnel, — there was one gentleman opposite; it was pitch-dark; after the Tunnel the lady said, 'George, how absurd of you to salute me going through the tunnel!' — 'I did no such thing!' — 'You did n't?' — 'No! why?' — 'Why, because somehow I thought you did!'" Here Captain Dolignan laughed, and endeavored to lead his companion to laugh, but it was not to be done. The train entered the tunnel.

Miss Haythorn. "Ah!"

Dolignan. "What is the matter?"

Miss Haythorn. "I am frightened."

Dolignan (moving to her side). "Pray do not be alarmed, I am near you."

Miss Haythorn. "You *are* near me, very near me indeed, Captain Dolignan."

Dolignan. "You know my name!"

Miss Haythorn. "I heard your friend mention it. I wish we were out of this dark place."

Dolignan. "I could be content to spend hours here, reassuring you, sweet lady."

Miss Haythorn. "Nonsense!"

Dolignan. "Pweep!" (Grave reader, do not put your lips to the cheek of the next pretty creature you meet, or you will understand what this means.)

Miss Haythorn. "Ee! Ee! Ee!"

Friend. "What is the matter?"

Miss Haythorn. "Open the door! open the door!"

There was a sound of hurried whispers, the door was shut and the blind pulled down with hostile sharpness.

If any critic falls on me for putting inarticulate sounds in a dialogue as above, I answer with all the insolence I can command at present, "Hit boys as big as yourself," bigger perhaps, such as Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes; they began it, and I learned it of them, *sore* against my will.

Miss Haythorn's scream lost a part of its effect because the engine whis-

* This is supposed to allude to two decoctions called port and sherry, and imagined by one earthly nation to partake of a vinous nature.

tled forty thousand murders at the same moment; and fictitious grief makes itself heard when real cannot.

Between the tunnel and Bath our young friend had time to ask himself whether his conduct had been marked by that delicate reserve which is supposed to distinguish the perfect gentleman.

With a long face, real or feigned, he held open the door, — his late friends attempted to escape on the other side, — impossible! they must pass him. She whom he had insulted (Latin for kissed) deposited somewhere at his foot a look of gentle blushing reproach; the other, whom he had not insulted, darted red-hot daggers at him from her eyes, and so they parted.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for Dolignan that he had the grace to be friends with Major Hoskyns of his regiment, a veteran laughed at by the youngsters, for the Major was too apt to look coldly upon billiard balls and cigars; he had seen cannon balls and linstocks. He had also, to tell the truth, swallowed a good bit of the mess-room poker, but with it some sort of moral poker, which made it as impossible for Major Hoskyns to descend to an ungentlemanlike word or action as to brush his own trousers below the knee.

Captain Dolignan told this gentleman his story in gleeful accents; but Major Hoskyns heard him coldly, and as coldly answered that he had known a man lose his life for the same thing. "*That* is nothing," continued the Major, "but unfortunately he deserved to lose it."

At this the blood mounted to the younger man's temples, and his senior added: "I mean to say he was thirty-five; you, I presume, are twenty-one!"

"Twenty-five."

"That is much the same thing; will you be advised by me?"

"If you will advise me."

"Speak to no one of this, and send White the £3 that he may think you have lost the bet."

"That is hard when I won it!"

"Do it for all that, sir."

Let the disbelievers in human perfectibility know that this dragoon capable of a blush did this virtuous action, albeit with violent reluctance: and this was his first damper. A week after these events, he was at a ball. He was in that state of factitious discontent which belongs to us amiable English. He was looking, in vain, for a lady, equal in personal attractions to the idea he had formed of George Dolignan as a man, when suddenly there glided past him a most delightful vision! a lady whose beauty and symmetry took him by the eyes, — another look: "It can't be! — Yes, it is!" Miss Haythorn! (not that he knew her name!) but what an apotheosis!

The duck had become a pea-hen, — radiant, dazzling, she looked twice as beautiful and almost twice as large as before. He lost sight of her. He found her again. She was so lovely she made him ill, — and he, alone, must not dance with her, speak to her. If he had been content to begin her acquaintance the usual way, it might have ended in kissing, but having begun with kissing it must end in nothing. As she danced, sparks of beauty fell from her on all around, but him, — she did not see him; it was clear she never would see him, — one gentleman was particularly assiduous; she smiled on his assiduity; he was ugly, but she smiled on him. Dolignan was surprised at his success, his ill taste, his ugliness, his impertinence. Dolignan at last found himself injured. "Who was this man? and what right had he to go on so? He had never kissed her, I suppose," said Dolly. Dolignan could not prove it, but he felt that somehow the rights of property were invaded. He went home and dreamed of Miss Haythorn, and hated all the ugly successful.* He spent a fort-

* When our successful rival is ugly the

night trying to find out who this beauty was, — he never could encounter her again. At last he heard of her in this way; a lawyer's clerk paid him a little visit and commenced a little action against him, in the name of Miss Haythorn, for insulting her in a railway train.

The young gentleman was shocked; endeavored to soften the lawyer's clerk; that machine did not thoroughly comprehend the meaning of the term. The lady's name, however, was at least revealed by this untoward incident; from her name to her address was but a short step; and the same day our crestfallen hero lay in wait at her door, and many a succeeding day, without effect. But one fine afternoon she issued forth quite naturally, as if she did it every day, and walked briskly on the nearest Parade. Dolignan did the same, he met and passed her many times on the Parade, and searched for pity in her eyes, but found neither look, nor recognition, nor any other sentiment; for all this she walked and walked, till all the other promenaders were tired and gone, — then her culprit summoned resolution, and taking off his hat, with a voice tremulous for the first time, besought permission to address her. She stopped, blushed, and neither acknowledged nor disowned his acquaintance. He blushed, stammered out how ashamed he was, how he deserved to be punished, how he *was* punished, how little she knew how unhappy he was; and concluded by begging her not to let all the world know the disgrace of a man who was already mortified enough by the loss of her acquaintance. She asked an explanation; he told her of the action that had been commenced in her name; she gently shrugged her shoulders, and said, "How stupid they are." Emboldened by this, he begged to know whether or not a life of distant unpretending devotion would, after a lapse of years, erase the memory of his madness, — his crime!

"She did not know!

"She must now bid him adieu, as she had some preparations to make for a ball in the crescent, where *everybody was to be.*" They parted, and Dolignan determined to be at the ball, where everybody was to be. He was there, and after some time he obtained an introduction to Miss Haythorn, and he danced with her. Her manner was gracious. With the wonderful tact of her sex, she seemed to have commenced the acquaintance that evening. That night, for the first time, Dolignan was in love. I will spare the reader all a lover's arts, by which he succeeded in dining where she dined, in dancing where she danced, in overtaking her by accident, when she rode. His devotion followed her even to church, where our dragoon was rewarded by learning there is a world where they neither polk nor smoke, — the two capital abominations of this one.

He made acquaintance with her uncle, who liked him, and he saw at last, with joy, that her eye loved to dwell upon him, when she thought he did not observe her.

It was three months after the Box Tunnel, that Captain Dolignan called one day upon Captain Haythorn, R. N., whom he had met twice in his life, and slightly propitiated by violently listening to a cutting-out expedition; he called, and in the usual way asked permission to pay his addresses to his daughter. The worthy Captain straightway began doing Quarter-Deck, when suddenly he was summoned from the apartment by a mysterious message. On his return he announced, with a total change of voice, that, "It was all right, and his visitor might run alongside as soon as he chose." My reader has divined the truth; this nautical commander, terrible to the foe, was in complete and happy subjugation to his daughter, our heroine.

As he was taking leave, Dolignan

blow is doubly severe, crushing, — we fall by bludgeon: we who thought the keenest rapier might perchance thrust at us in vain.

saw his divinity glide into the drawing-room. He followed her, observed a sweet consciousness which encouraged him; that consciousness deepened into confusion, — she tried to laugh, she cried instead, and then she smiled again; and when he kissed her hand at the door, it was "George," and "Marian," instead of Captain this, and Miss the other. A reasonable time after this (for my tale is merciful and skips formalities and torturing delays), these two were very happy, — they were once more upon the railroad, going to enjoy their honeymoon all by themselves. Marian Dolignan was dressed just as before, — duck-like, and delicious; all bright, except her clothes: but George sat beside her this time instead of opposite; and she drank him in gently from under her long eyelashes. "Marian," said George, "married people should tell each other all. Will you ever forgive me if I own to you — no — "

"Yes! yes!"

"Well, then! you remember the Box Tunnel" (this was the first allusion he had ventured to it), "I am ashamed to say I had bet £3 to £10 with White, I would kiss one of you two ladies"; and George, pathetic externally, chuckled within.

"I know that, George; I overheard you," was the demure reply.

"O, you overheard me? impossible."

"And did you not hear me whisper to my companion? I made a bet with her."

"You made a bet, how singular! What was it?"

"Only a pair of gloves, George."

"Yes, I know, but what about it?"

"That, if you did, you should be my husband, dearest."

"Oh! — but stay — then you could not have been so very angry with me, love; why, dearest, then who brought that action against me?"

Mrs. Dolignan looked down.

"I was afraid you were forgetting me! George, you will never forgive me?"

"Sweet angel, why, here is the Box Tunnel!"

Now, reader, — fie! — no! no such thing! You can't expect to be indulged in this way, every time we come to a dark place, — besides, it is not the thing. Consider, two sensible married people, — no such phenomenon, I assure you, took place. No scream issued in hopeless rivalry of the engine — this time!

JACK OF ALL TRADES.

A MATTER-OF-FACT ROMANCE.

JACK OF ALL TRADES.

THERE are nobs in the world, and there are snobs.

I regret to say I belong to the latter department.

There are men that roll through life, like a fire-new red ball going across Mr. Lord's cricket-ground on a sunshiny day; there is another sort that have to rough it in general, and, above all, to fight tooth and nail for the quartern-loaf, and not always win the battle. I am one of this lot.

One comfort, folk are beginning to take an interest in us. I see nobs of the first water looking with a fatherly eye into our affairs, — our leaden taxes and feather incomes; our fifteen per cent on undeniable security when the rich pay but three and a half; our privations and vexations; our dirt and distresses; and one day a literary gent, that knows my horrible story, assured me that my ups and downs would entertain the nobility, gentry, and commonalty of these realms.

"Instead of grumbling to me," says he, "print your troubles, and I promise you all the world will read them, and laugh at them."

"No doubt, sir," said I, rather ironical; "all the world is at leisure for that."

"Why, look at the signs of the times," says he; "can't you see workmen are up? so take us while we are in the humor, and that is now. We shall not always be for squeezing honey out of weeds, shall we?" "Not likely, sir," says I. Says he, "How nice it will be to growl wholesale to a hundred thousand of your countrymen (which they do love a bit of a growl), instead of growling retail to a small family that has got hardened to you!" And there he had me; for I am an Englishman, and proud of it, and attached to all the national habits except delirium tremens. In short, what with him inflaming my dormant conceit, and me thinking, "Well, I can but say my say, and then relapse into befitting silence," I did one day lay down the gauge and take up the pen, in spite of my wife's sorrowful looks.

She says nothing, but you may see she does not believe in the new tool, and that is cheerful and inspiriting to a beginner.

However, there is a something that gives me more confidence than all my literary friend says about "workmen being up in the literary world," and that is that I am not the hero of my own story.

Small as I sit here behind my wife's crockery and my own fiddles, in this thundering hole, Wardour Street, I was for many years connected with one of the most celebrated females of modern times. Her adventures run side by side with mine. She is the bit of romance that colors my humble life, and my safest excuse for intruding on the public.

CHAPTER I.

FATHER and mother lived in King Street, Soho: he was a fiddle-maker,

and taught me the A B C of that science at odd times; for I had a regular education, and a very good one, at a school in West Street. This part of my life was as smooth as glass. My troubles did not begin till I was thirteen: at that age my mother died, and then I found out what she *had been* to me: that was the first and the worst grief; the next I thought bad enough. Coming in from school one day, about nine months after her death, I found a woman sitting by the fire opposite father.

I came to a stand in the middle of the floor, with two eyes like saucers, staring at the pair; so my father introduced me.

"This is your new mother. Anne, this is John!"

"Come and kiss me, John," says the lady. Instead of which John stood stock-still, and burst out roaring and crying without the least leaving off staring, which to be sure was a cheerful, encouraging reception for a lady just come into the family. I roared pretty hard for about ten seconds, then stopped dead short, and says I, with a sudden calm, the more awful for the storm that had raged before: "I'll go and tell Mr. Paley!" and out I marched.

Mr. Paley was a little humpbacked tailor, with the heart of a dove and the spirit of a lion or two. I made his acquaintance through pitching into two boys that were queering his protuberances all down Princes Street, Soho; a kind of low humor he detested; and he had taken quite a fancy to me. We were hand and glove, the old man and me.

I ran to Paley and told him what had befallen upon the house. He was not struck all of a heap, as I thought he would be; and he showed me it was legal, of which I had not an idea; and his advice was: "Put a good face on it, or the house will soon be too hot to hold you, boy."

He was right. I don't know whether it was my fault or hers, or both's, but we could never mix. I had seen another face by that fireside, and heard another voice in the house, that seemed to me a deal more melodious than hers, and the house did become hotter, and the inmates' looks colder than agreeable; so one day I asked my father to settle me in some other house not less than a mile from King Street, Soho. He and step-mother jumped at the offer, and apprenticed me to Mr. Dawes. Here I learned more mysteries of guitar-making, violin-making, etc., etc., and lived in tolerable comfort nearly four years; there was a ripple on the water, though. My master had a brother, a thickset, heavy fellow, that used to bully my master, especially when he was groggy, and less able to take his own part. My master being a good fellow, I used to side with him, and this brought me a skinful of sore bones more than once, I can tell you. But one night, after some months of peace, I heard a terrible scrimmage, and, running down into the shop-parlor, I found Dawes junior pegging into Dawes senior no allowance, and him crying blue murder.

I was now an able-bodied youth between sixteen and seventeen years of age, and, having a little score of my own with the attacking party, I opened quite silent and business-like with a one, two, and knocked him into a corner flat perpendicular. He was dumfoundered for a moment, but the next he came out like a bull at me. I stepped on one side, and met him with a blow on the side of the temple, and knocked him flat horizontal; and when he offered to rise I shook my fist at him, and threatened him he should come to grief if he dared to move.

At this time he went on quite a different lay. He lay still, and feigned dissolution with considerable skill, to frighten us; and I can't say I felt easy at all; but my master, who took cheerful views of everything in his cups, got the enemy's tumbler of brandy and water, and with hiccoughs

and absurd smiles, and a teaspoon, deposited the contents gradually on the various parts of his body.

"Lez revive 'm!" said he.

This was low life to come to pass in a respectable tradesman's back parlor. But, when grog comes in at the door, good manners walk to the window, ready to take leave if requested. Where there is drink there is always degradation of some sort or degree; put that in your tumblers and sip it!

After this no more battles. The lowly apprentice's humble efforts (pugilistic) restored peace to his master's family.

Six months of calm industry now rolled over, and then I got into trouble by my own fault.

Looking back upon the various fancies, and opinions, and crotchets that have passed through my head at one time or another, I find that, between the years of seventeen and twenty-four, a strange notion beset me; it was this: that women are all angels.

For this chimera I now began to suffer, and continued to at intervals till the error was rooted out, — with their assistance.

There were two women in my master's house, — his sister, aged twenty-four, and his cook, aged thirty-seven. With both these I fell ardently in love; and so, with my sentiments, I should have with six, had the house held half a dozen. Unluckily, my affections were not accompanied with the discretion so ticklish a situation called for. The ladies found one another out, and I fell a victim to the virtuous indignation that fired three bosoms.

The cook, in virtuous indignation that an apprentice should woo his master's sister, told my master.

The young lady, in virtuous indig. that a boy should make a fool of "that old woman," told my master, who, unluckily for me, was now the quondam Dawes junior; Dawes senior having retired from the active business, and turned sleeping and drinking partner.

My master, whose v. i. was the strongest of the three, since it was him I had leathered, took me to Bow Street, made his complaint, and forced me to cancel my indentures; the cook, with tears, packed up my Sunday suit; the young lady opened her bedroom door three inches, and shut it with a don't-come-anigh-me slam; and I drifted out to London with eighteenpence and my tools.

On looking back on this incident of my life, I have a regret, — a poignant one; it is, that some good Christian did not give me a devilish good hiding into the bargain then and there.

I did not feel quit strong enough in the spirits to go where I was sure to be blown up, so I skirted King Street and entered the Seven Dials, and went to Mr. Paley and confessed my sins.

How differently the same thing is seen by different eyes! All the morning I had been called a young villain, first by one, then by another, till at last I began to see it. Mr. Paley viewed me in the light of martyr, and I remember I fell into his views on the spot.

Paley was a man that had his little theory about women, and it differed from my juvenile one.

He held that women are at bottom the seducers, men the seduced. "The men court the women, I grant you, but so it is the fish that runs after the bait," said he. "The women draw back? yes, and so does the angler draw back the bait when the fish are shy, don't he? and then the silly gudgeons misunderstand the move, and make a rush at it, and get hooked, — like you."

Holding such vile sentiments, he shifted all the blame off my shoulders. He turned to and abused the whole gang, as he called the family in Litchfield Street I had just left, instead of reading me the lesson for the day, which he ought, and I should have listened to from him, — perhaps.

"Now, then, don't hang your head

like that," shouted the spunky little fellow, "snivelling and whimpering at your time of life! We are going to have a jolly good supper, you and I, that is what *we* are going to do; and you shall sleep here. My daughter is at school; you shall have her room. I am in good work, — thirty shillings a week, — that is plenty for three, Lucy and you and me" (himself last). "Your father is n't worth a bone button, and your mother is n't worth the shank to it; I'm your father, and your mother into the bargain, for want of a better. You live with me, and snap your fingers at Dawes and all his crew, — ha! ha! a fine loss, to be sure. The boy is a fool, — cooks, and coquettes, and fiddle-touters, rubbish not worth picking up out of a gutter, — they be d—d."

And so I was installed in Miss Paley's apartment, Seven Dials; and nothing would have made my adopted parent happier than for me to put my hands in my pockets, and live upon goose and cabbage. But downright laziness was never my character. I went round to all the fiddle-shops, and offered, as bold as brass, to make a violin, a tenor or a bass, and bring it home. Most of them looked shy at me, for it was necessary to trust me with the wood, and to lend me one or two of the higher class of tools, such as a turning-saw and a jointing-plane.

At last I came to Mr. Dodd, in Berners Street. Here my father's name stood me in stead. Mr. Dodd risked his wood and the needful tools, and in eight days I brought him, with conceit and trepidation mixed in equal part, a violin, which I had sometimes feared would frighten him, and sometimes hoped would charm him. He took it up, gave it one twirl round, satisfied himself it was a fiddle, good, bad, or indifferent, put it in the window along with the rest, and paid for it as he would for a penny roll. I timidly proposed to make another for him; he grunted a consent, which it did not seem to me a rapturous one.

Mr. Metzler also ventured to give me work of this kind. For some months I wrought hard all day, and amused myself with my companions all the evening, selecting my pals from the following classes: small actors, show-men, pedestrians, and clever discontented mechanics; one lot I never would have at any price, and that was the stupid ones, that could only booze, and could not tell me anything I did not know about pleasure, business, and life.

This was a bright existence; so it came to a full stop.

At one and the same time Miss Paley came home, and the fiddle-trade took one of those chills all fancy trades are subject to.

No work — no lodging without paying for it — no wherewithal.

CHAPTER II.

John Beard, a friend of mine, was a painter and grainer. His art was to imitate oak, maple, walnut, satin-wood, etc., etc., upon vulgar deal, beech, or what not.

This business works thus: first, a coat of oil-color is put on with a brush, and this color imitates what may be called the background of the wood that is aimed at; on this oil-background the champ, the fibre, the grain and figure, and all the incidents of the superior wood, are imitated by various manœuvres in water-colors, or, rather, in beer-colors, for beer is the approved medium. A coat of varnish over all gives a unity to the work.

Beard was out of employ; so was I: bitter against London; so was I. He sounded me about trying the country, and I agreed; and this was the first step of my many travels.

We started the next day, — he with his brushes, and a few colors, and one or two thin panels painted by way of advertisement, and I with hope, inexperience, and threepence. On the

road we spent this and his fivepence, and entered the town of Brentford toward nightfall as empty as drums and as hungry as wolves.

What was to be done? After a long discussion, we agreed to go to the mayor of the town and tell him our case, and offer to paint his street door in the morning if he would save our lives for the night.

We went to the mayor; luckily for us, he had risen from nothing, as we were going to do, and so he knew exactly what we meant when we looked up in his face and laid our hands on our sausage-grinders. He gave us eighteen-pence and an order on a lodging-house, and put bounds to our gratitude by making us promise to let his street door alone. We thanked him from our hearts, supped and went to bed, and agreed the country (as we two cockneys called Brentford) was chock-full of good fellows.

The next day up early in the morning, and away to Hounslow. Here Beard sought work all through the town, and just when we were in despair he got one door. We dined and slept on this door, but we could not sup off it; we had twopence over, though, for the morning, and walked on a penny roll each to Maidenhead.

Here, as we entered the town, we passed a little house with the door painted oak, and a brass plate announcing a plumber and glazier, and house-painter. Beard pulled up before this door in sorrowful contempt. "Now look here, John," says he, "here is a fellow living among the woods, and you would swear he never saw an oak plank in his life to look at his work."

Before so very long we came to another specimen: this was maple, and further from Nature than a lawyer from heaven, as the saying is. "There, that will do," says Beard. "I'll tell you what it is, we must try a different move; it is no use looking for work; folks will only employ their own tradesmen; we must teach the professors of the art at so much a panel."

"Will they stomach that?" said I.

"I think they will, as we are strangers and from London. You go and see whether there is a fiddle to be doctored in the town, and meet me again in the market-place at twelve o'clock."

I did meet him, and forlorn enough I was. My trade had broke down in Maidenhead; not a job of any sort.

"Come to the public-house!" was his first word. That sounded well, I thought.

We sat down to bread and cheese and beer, and he told his tale.

It seems he went into a shop, told the master he was a painter and grainer from a great establishment in London, and was in the habit of travelling and instructing provincial artists in the business. The man was a pompous sort of a customer, and told Beard he knew the business as well as he did, better belike.

Beard answered: "Then you are the only one here that does; for I've been all through the town, and anything wider from the mark than their oak and maple I never saw." Then he quietly took down his panels and spread them out, and, looking out sharp, he noticed a sudden change come over the man's face.

"Well," says the man, "we reckon ourselves pretty good at it in this town. However, I should n't mind seeing how you London chaps do it: what do you charge for a specimen?"

"My charge is two shillings a panel. What wood should you like to gain a notion of?" said Beard, as dry as a chip.

"Well, — satin-wood."

Beard painted a panel of satin-wood before his eyes, and, of course, it was done with great ease, and on a better system than had reached Maidenhead up to that time. "Now," says Beard, "I must go to dinner."

"Well, come back again, my lad," says the man, "and we will go in for something else." So Beard took his

two shillings and met me as aforesaid.

After dinner he asked for a private room. "A private room," said I; "had n't you better order our horse and gig out, and go and call on the rector?"

"None of your chaff," says he.

When we got into the room he opened the business.

"Your trade is no good; you must take to mine."

"What! teach painters how to paint, when I don't know a stroke myself!"

"Why not? You 've only got it to learn; they have got to unlearn all they know; that is the only long process about it. I 'll teach you in five minutes," says he: "look here." He then imitated oak before me, and made me do it. He corrected my first attempt; the second satisfied him: we then went on to maple, and so through all the woods he could mimic. He then returned to his customer, and I hunted in another part of the town, and before nightfall I actually gave three lessons to two professors: it is amazing, but true, that I, who had been learning ten minutes, taught men who had been all their lives at it — in the country.

One was so pleased with his tutor that he gave me a pint of beer besides my fee. I thought he was poking fun when he first offered it me.

Beard and I met again triumphant. We had a rousing supper and a good bed, and the next day started for Henley, where we both did a small stroke of business, and on to Reading for the night.

Our goal was Bristol. Beard had friends there. But as we zigzagged for the sake of the towns, we were three weeks walking to that city; but we reached it at last, having disseminated the science of graining in many cities, and got good clothes and money in return.

At Bristol we parted. He found regular employment the first day, and I visited the fiddle-shops and offered my services. At most I was refused; at one or two I got trifling jobs; but at last I went to the right one. The master agreed with me for piece-work on a large scale, and the terms were such that by working quick and very steady I could make about twenty-five shillings a week. At this I kept two years, and might have longer, no doubt, — but my employer's niece came to live with him.

She was a woman; and my theory being in full career at this date, mutual ardor followed, and I asked her hand of her uncle, and instead of that he gave me what the Turkish ladies get for the same offence, — the sack. Off to London again, and the money I had saved by my industry just landed me in the Seven Dials and sixpence over.

I went to Paley, crestfallen as usual. He heard my story, complimented me on my energy, industry, and talent, regretted the existence of woman, and inveighed against her character and results.

We went that evening to private theatricals in Berwick Street, and there I fell in with an acquaintance in the firework line. On hearing my case, he told me I had just fallen from the skies in time; his employer wanted a fresh hand.

The very next day behold me grinding, and sifting, and ramming powder at Somers Town, and at it ten months.

My evenings, when I was not undoing my own work to show its brilliancy, were often spent in private theatricals.

I hear a row made just now about a dramatic school.

"We have no dramatic schools," is the cry. Well, in the day I speak of there were several; why, I belonged to two. We never brought to light an actor, but we succeeded so far as to ruin more than one lad who had brains enough to make a tradesman, till we heated those brains and they boiled all away.

The way we destroyed youth was this: of course nobody would pay a

shilling at the door to see us running wild among Shakespeare's lines like pigs broken into a garden, so the expenses fell upon the actors, and they paid according to the value of the part each played. Richard the Third cost a puppy two pounds; Richmond, fifteen shillings; and so on; so that with us, as in the big world, dignity went by wealth, not merit. I remember this made me sore at the time; still, there are two sides to everything: they say poverty urges men to crime; mine saved me from it. If I could have afforded, I would have murdered one or two characters that have lived with good reputation from Queen Bess to Queen Victoria; but, as I could n't afford it, others that could did it for me.

Well, in return for his cash Richard, or Hamlet, or Othello commanded tickets in proportion; for the tickets were only gratuitous to the spectators.

Consequently, at night, each important actor played not only to a most merciful audience, but a large band of devoted friendly spirits in it, who came, not to judge him, but express to carry him through triumphant, — like an election. Now when a vain, ignorant chap hears a lot of hands clapping, he has not the sense to say to himself "paid for!" No, it is applause, and applause stamps his own secret opinion of himself. He was off his balance before, and now he tumbles heel over tip into the notion that he is a genius; throws his commercial prospects after the two pounds that went in Richard or Beverley, and crosses Waterloo Bridge spouting,

> "A fico for the shop and poplins base!
> Counter, avaunt! I on his southern bank
> Will fire the Thames."

Noodle, thus singing, goes over the water. But they won't have him at the Surrey or the Vic., so he takes to the country; and, while his money lasts, and he can pay the mismanager of a small theatre, he gets leave to play with Richard and Hamlet. But when the money is gone, and he wants to be paid for Richard & Co., they laugh at him, and put him in his right place, and that is a utility, and perhaps ends a "super"; when, if he had not been a coxcomb, he might have sold ribbon like a man to his dying day.

We and our dramatic schools ruined more than one or two of this sort by means of his vanity in my young days.

My poverty saved me. The conceit was here in vast abundance, but not the funds to intoxicate myself with such choice liquors as Hamlet & Co. Nothing above old Gobbo (five shillings) ever fell to my lot and by my talent.

When I had made and let off fireworks for a few months, I thought I could make more as a rocket-master than a rocket-man. I had saved a pound or two. Most of my friends dissuaded me from the attempt; but Paley said: "Let him alone now; don't keep him down; he is born to rise. I 'll risk a pound on him." So, by dint of several small loans, I got the materials and made a set of fireworks myself, and agreed with the keeper of some tea-gardens at Hampstead for the spot.

At the appointed time, attended by a trusty band of friends, I put them up; and, when I had taken a tolerable sum at the door, I let them all off.

But they did not all profit by the permission. Some went, but others, whose supposed destination was the sky, soared about as high as a house, then returned and forgot their wild nature, and performed the office of our household fires upon the clothes of my visitors; and some faithful spirits, like old domestics, would not leave their master at any price, — would not take their discharge. Then there was a row, and I should have been mauled, but my guards rallied round me and brought me off with whole bones, and marched back to

London with me, quizzing me and drinking at my expense. The publican refused to give me my promised fee, and my loss by ambition was twenty-eight shillings and my reputation, — if you could call that a loss.

Was not I quizzed up and down the Seven Dials! Paley alone contrived to stand out in my favor. "Nonsense! a first attempt," said he; "they mostly fail. Don't you give in for those fools! I 'll tell you a story. There was a chap in prison — I forget his name. He lived in the old times a few hundred years ago. I can't justly say how many. He had failed, — at something or other, — I don't know how many times, and there he was. Well, Jack, one day he notices a spider climbing up a thundering great slippery stone in the wall. She got a little way, then down she fell; up again, and tries it on again; down again. Ah! says the man, you will never do it. But the spider was game. She got six falls, but, by George, the seventh trial she got up. So the gentleman says, 'A man ought to have as much heart as a spider: I won't give in till the seventh trial.' Bless you, long before the seventh he carried all before him, and got to be King of England — or something."

"King of England!" said I; "that was a move upward out of the stone jug."

"Well," said Paley the hopeful, "you can't be King of England, but you may be the fire-king — he! he! — if you are true to powder. How much money do you want to try again?"

I was nettled at my failure; and, fired by Paley and his spider, I scraped together a few pounds once more, and advertised a display of fireworks for a certain Monday night.

On the Sunday afternoon Paley and I happened to walk on the Hampstead Road, and near the Adam and Eve we fell in with an announcement of fireworks. On the bill appeared in enormous letters the following: —

"NO CONNECTION WITH THE DISGRACEFUL EXHIBITION THAT TOOK PLACE LAST FRIDAY WEEK!!"

Paley was in a towering passion. "Look here, John," says he; "but never you mind; it won't be here long, for I 'll tear it down in about half a moment."

"No, you must not do that," said I, a little nervous.

"Why not, you poor-spirited muff?" shouts the little fellow: "let me alone — let me get at it — what are you holding me for?"

"No! no! no! Well, then —"

"Well, then, what?"

"Well, then, it is mine."

"What is yours?"

"That advertisement."

"How can it be yours, when it insults you?"

"O, business before vanity."

"Well, I am blessed! Here 's a go. Look here, now"; and he began to split his sides laughing; but all of a sudden he turned awful grave: "You will rise, my lad; this is genuine talent; they might as well try to keep a balloon down." In short, my friend, who was as honest as the day in his own sayings and doings, admired this bit of rascality in me, and augured the happiest results.

That district of London which is called the Seven Dials was now divided into two great parties; one augured for me a brilliant success next day, the other a dead failure. The latter party numbered many names unknown to fame, the former consisted of Paley. I was neuter, distrusting, not my merits, but what I called my luck.

On Monday afternoon I was busy putting out the fireworks, nailing them to their posts, etc. Toward evening it began to rain so heavily that they had to be taken in, and the whole thing given up; it was postponed to Thursday.

On Thursday night we had a good

assembly; the sum taken at the doors exceeded my expectation. I had my misgivings on account of the rain that had fallen on my kickshaws Monday evening, so I began with those articles I had taken in first out of the rain. They went off splendidly, and my personal friends were astounded; but soon my poverty began to tell. Instead of having many hands to save the fireworks from wet, I had been alone, and of course much time had been lost in getting them under cover. We began now to get among the damp lot, and science was lost in chance; some would and some would n't, and the people began to goose me.

A rocket or two that fizzled themselves out without rising a foot inflamed their angry passions; so I announced two fiery pigeons.

The fiery pigeon is a pretty firework enough. It is of the nature of a rocket, but, being on a string, it travels backward and forward between two termini, to which the string is fixed. When there are two strings and two pigeons, the fiery wings race one another across the ground, and charm the gazing throng. One of my termini was a tree at the extremity of the gardens. Up this tree I mounted in my shirt-sleeves with my birds. The people surrounded the tree, and were dead silent. I could see their final verdict and my fate hung on these pigeons. I placed them, and with a beating heart lighted their matches. To my horror, one did not move. I might as well have tried to explode green sticks. The other started and went off with great resolution and accompanying cheers toward the opposite side. But midway it suddenly stopped, and the cheers with it. It did not come to an end all at once, but the fire oozed gradually out of it like water. A howl of derision was hurled up into the tree at me; but, worse than that, looking down, I saw in the moonlight a hundred stern faces, with eyes like red-hot emeralds, in which I read my fate. They were waiting for me to come down, like terriers for a rat in a trap, and I felt by the look of them that they would kill me, or near it. I crept along a bough, the end of which cleared the wall and overhung the road. I determined to break my neck sooner than fall into the hands of an insulted public. An impatient orange whizzed by my ear, and an apple knocked my hat out of the premises. I crouched and clung; luckily, I was on an ash-bough, long, tapering, and tough; it bent with me like a rainbow. A stick or two now whizzed past my ear, and it began to hail fruit. I held on like grim death till the road was within six feet of me, and then dropped and ran off home, like a dog with a kettle at his tail. Meantime a rush was made to the gate to cut me off; but it was too late. The garden meandered, and my executioners, when they got to the outside, saw nothing but a flitting spectre — me in my shirt-sleeves making for the Seven Dials.

Mr. and Miss Paley were seated by their fire, and, as I afterward learned, Paley was recommending her to me for a husband, and explaining to her at some length why I was sure to rise in the world, when a figure in shirt-sleeves, begrimed with gunpowder, and no hat, burst into the room, and shrank without a word into the corner by the fire.

Miss Paley looked up, and then began to look down and snigger. Her father stared at me, and after a while I could see him set his teeth and nerve his obstinate old heart for the coming struggle.

"Well, how did it happen?" said he, at last. "Where is your coat?"

I told him the whole story.

Miss Paley had her hand to her mouth all the time, afraid to give vent to the feelings proper to the occasion because of her father.

"Now answer me one question. Have you got their money?" says Paley.

"Yes, I have got their money, for that matter."

"Well, then, what need you care? You are all right; and if they had gone off they would have been all over by now, just the same. He wants his supper, Lucy. Give us something hot, to make us forget our squibs and crackers, or we shall die of a broken heart, all us poor fainting souls. Such a calamity! The rain wetted them through, — that is all; you could n't fight against the elements, could you? Lay the cloth, girl."

"But, Mr. Paley," whined I, "they have got my new coat, and you may be sure they have torn it limb from jacket."

"Have they?" cried he; "well, that is a comfort, any way. Your new coat, eh? Lucy, it hung on the boy's back like an old sack. Do you see this bit of cloth? I shall make you a Sunday coat with this, and then you 'll sell. Fetch a quart to-night, girl, instead of a pint: the fire-king is going to do us the honor. Che-er up!!"

CHAPTER III.

It was now time that Miss Paley should suffer the penalty of her sex. She was a comely, good-humored, and sensible girl. We used often to walk out together on Sundays, and very friendly we were. I used to tell her she was the flower of her sex, and she used to laugh at that. One Sunday I spoke more plainly, and laid my heart, my thirteen shillings, the fruit of my last imposture on the public, and my various arts, at her feet, out walking.

A proposal of this sort, if I may trust the stories I read, produces thrilling effects. If agreeable, the ladies either refuse in order to torment themselves, which act of virtue justifies them, they think, in tormenting the man they love, or else they show their rapturous assent by bursting out crying, or by fainting away, or their lips turning cold, and other signs proper to a disordered stomach; if it is to be "no," they are almost as much cut up about it, and say no like yes, which has the happy result of leaving him hope and prolonging his pain. Miss Paley did quite different. She blushed a little, and smiled archly and said: "Now, John, you and I are good friends, and I like you very much, and I will walk with you and laugh with you as much as you like; but I have been engaged these two years to Charles Hook, and I love him, John."

"Do you, Lucy?"

"Yes," under her breath a bit.

"Oh!"

"So, if we are to be friends, you must not put that question to me again, John. What do you say? we are to be friends, are we not?" and she put out her hand.

"Yes, Lucy."

"And, John, you need not go for to tell my father; what is the use vexing him? He has got a notion, but it will pass away in time."

I consented, of course, and Lucy and I were friends.

Mr. Paley somehow suspected which way his daughter's heart turned, and not long after a neighbor told me he heard him quizzing her unmerciful for her bad judgment. As for harshness or tyranny, that was not under his skin, as the saying is. He wound up with telling her that John was a man safe to rise.

"I hope he may, father, I am sure," says Lucy.

"Well, and can't you see he is the man for you?"

"No, father, I can't see that, — he! he!"

CHAPTER IV.

I don't think I have been penniless not a dozen times in my life. When I get down to twopence or threepence, which is very frequent indeed, something is apt to turn up and raise me to silver once more, and there I stick. But about this time I lay out

of work a long time, and was reduced to the lowest ebb. In this condition, a friend of mine took me to the "Harp," in Little Russell Street, to meet Mr. Webb, the manager of a strolling company. Mr. Webb was beating London for recruits to complete his company which lay at Bishops Stortford, but which, owing to desertions, was not numerous enough to massacre five-act plays. I instantly offered to go as carpenter and scene-shifter. To this he demurred: he was provided with them already; he wanted actors. To this I objected, not that I cared to what sort of work I turned my hand, but in these companies a carpenter is paid for his day's work according to his agreement, but the actors are remunerated by a share in the night's profits, and the profits are often written in the following figures, — £0 0*s.* 0*d.*

However, Mr. Webb was firm; he had no carpenter's place to offer me, so I was obliged to lower my pretensions. I agreed then to be an actor. I was cast as Father Philip, in the "Iron Chest," next evening, my share of the profits to be one eighth. I borrowed a shilling, and my friend Johnstone and I walked all the way to Bishops Stortford. We played the "Iron Chest" and divided the profits. Hitherto I had been in the mechanical arts; this was my first step into the fine ones. Father Philip's share of the "Chest" was 2½*d.*

Now this might be a just remuneration for the performance; I almost think it was; but it left the walk, thirty miles, not accounted for.

The next night I was cast in "Jerry Sneak." I had no objection to the part, only, under existing circumstances, the place to play it seemed to me to be the road to London, not the boards of Bishops Stortford; so I sneaked off toward the Seven Dials. Johnstone, though cast for the hero, was of Jerry's mind, and sneaked away along with him.

We had made but twelve miles when the manager and a constable came up with us. Those were peremptory days; they offered us our choice of the fine arts again, or prison. After a natural hesitation, we chose the arts, and were driven back to them like sheep. Night's profits 5*d.* In the morning the whole company dissolved away like a snowball. Johnstone and I had a meagre breakfast, and walked on it twenty-six miles. He was a stout fellow, — shone in brigands, — he encouraged and helped me along; but at last I could go no farther.

My slighter frame was quite worn out with hunger and fatigue. "Leave me," I said; "perhaps some charitable hand will aid me, and if not, why, then I shall die; and I don't care if I do, for I have lost all hope."

"Nonsense," cried the fine fellow. "I'll carry you home on my back sooner than leave you. Die? that is a word a man should never say. Come! courage! only four miles more."

No. I could not move from the spot. I was what I believe seldom really happens to any man, dead beat body and soul.

I sank down on a heap of stones. Johnstone sat down beside me.

The sun was just setting. It was a bad lookout, — starving people to lie out on stones all night. A man can stand cold, and he can fight with hunger; but put those two together, and life is soon exhausted.

At last a rumble was heard, and presently an empty coal-wagon came up. A coal-heaver sat on the shaft, and another walked by the side. Johnstone went to meet them; they stopped; I saw him pointing to me, and talking earnestly.

The men came up to me; they took hold of me, and shot me into the cart like a hundred-weight of coal. "Why, he is starving with cold," said one of them, and he flung half a dozen empty sacks over me, and on we went. At the first public the wagon stopped, and soon one of my new friends, with a cheerful voice,

brought a pewter flagon of porter to me. I sipped it. "Don't be afraid of it," cried he; "down with it; it is meat and drink, that is." And, indeed, so I found it. It was a heavenly solid liquid to me; it was "stout" by name and "stout" by nature.

These good fellows, whom men do right to call black diamonds, carried me safe into the Strand, and thence, being now quite my own man again, I reached the Seven Dials. Paley was in bed. He came down directly in his nightgown, and lighted a fire, and pulled a piece of cold beef out of the cupboard, and cheered me as usual, but in a fatherly way this time; and of course, at my age, I was soon all right again, and going to take the world by storm to-morrow morning. He left me for a while and went up stairs. Presently he came down again.

"Your bed is ready, John."

"Why," said I, "you have not three rooms."

"Lucy is on a visit," said he; then he paused. "Stop a bit; I'll warm your bed."

He took me up stairs to my old room and warmed the bed. I, like a thoughtless young fool, rolled into it half gone with sleep, and never woke till ten next morning.

I don't know what the reader will think of me when I tell him that the old man had turned Lucy out of her room into his own, and sat all night by the fire that I might lie soft after my troubles. Ah! he was a bit of steel. And have you left me, and can I share no more sorrow or joy with you in this world? Eh! dear, it makes me misty to think of the old man, — after all these years.

CHAPTER V.

I used often to repair and doctor a violin for a gent whom I shall call Chaplin. He played in the orchestra of the Adelphi Theatre. Mr. Chaplin was not only a customer, but a friend. He saw how badly off I was, and had a great desire to serve me. Now it so happened that Mr. Yates, the manager, was going to give an entertainment he called his "At Homes," and this took but a small orchestra, of which Mr. Chaplin was to be the leader; so he was allowed to engage the other instruments, and he actually proposed to me to be a second violin.

I stared at him. "How can I do that?"

"Why, I often hear you try a violin."

"Yes, and I always play the same notes; perhaps you have observed that too?"

"I notice it is always a slow movement — eh? Never mind, this is the only thing I can think of to serve you; you must strum out something; it will be a good thing for you, you know."

"Well," said I, "if Mr. Yates will promise to sing nothing faster than 'Je-ru-sa-lem, my hap-py home,' I'll accompany him."

No, he would not be laughed out of it; he was determined to put money in my pocket, and would take no denial. "Next Monday you will have the goodness to meet me at the theatre at six o'clock with your fiddle. Play how you like, play inaudible for what I care; but play and draw your weekly salary you must and shall."

"Play inaudible," — these words sunk to the very bottom of me, — "play inaudible."

I fell into a brown study: it lasted three days and three nights; finally, to my good patron's great content, I consented to come up to the scratch, and Monday night I had the hardihood to present myself in the music-room of the Adelphi. My violin was a ringing one. I tuned up the loudest of them all, and Mr. Chaplin's eye rested on me with an approving glance.

Time was called. We played an overture, and accompanied Mr. Yates

in his recitatives and songs, and performed pieces and airs between the acts, etc. The leader's eye often fell on me, and when it did, he saw the most conscientious workman of the crew ploughing every note with singular care and diligence.

In this same little orchestra was James Bates, another favorite of Mr. Chaplin, and an experienced fiddler.

This young man was a great chum of mine. He was a fine honest young fellow, but of rather a satanine temper. He was not movable to mirth at any price. He would play without a smile to a new pantomime, — stuck there all night, like Solomon cut in black marble with a white choker, as solemn as a tomb, with hundreds laughing all around.

Once or twice while we were at work I saw Mr. Chaplin look at Bates, knowing we two were chums, and whenever he did it seems the young one bit his lips and turned as red as a beet-root. After the lights were out Mr. Chaplin congratulated me before Bates. "There, you see, it is not so very hard; why, hang me if you did not saw away as well as the best!!!" At these words Bates gave a sort of yell and ran home. Mr. Chaplin looked after him with surprise. "There's some devil's delight up between you two," said he. "I shall find it out."

Next night in the tuning-room my fiddle was so resonant it attracted attention, and one or two asked leave to try it. "Why not?" said I.

During work Mr. Chaplin had one eye on me and one on Bates, and caught the perspiration running down my face, and him simpering for the first time in the history of the Adelphi.

"What has come over Jem Bates?" said Mr. Chaplin to me; "the lad is all changed. You have put some of your late gunpowder into him; there is something up between you two." After the play he got us together, and he looked Bates in the face, and just said to him, "Eh?"

At this wholesale interrogatory Bates laid hold of himself tight. "No, Mr. Chaplin, sir, I can't; it will kill me when it does come out of me."

"When what comes out? You young rascals, if you don't both of you tell me, I'll break my fiddle over Bates, and Jack shall mend it free of expense gratis for nothing, that is how I'll serve mutineers; come, out with it."

"Tell him, John," said Bates, demurely.

"No," said I, "tell him yourself, if you think it will gratify him." I had my doubts.

"Well," said Bates, "it is ungrateful to keep you out of it, sir, so — he! he! — I'll tell you, sir — this second violin has two bows in his violin-case."

"Well, stupid, what is commoner than that for a fiddler?"

"But this is not a fiddler," squeaked Bates; "he's only a bower. Oh! oh! oh!"

"Only a bower?"

"No! Oh! Oh! I shall die; it will kill me." I gave a sort of ghastly grin myself.

"You unconscionable scoundrels!" shouted Mr. Chaplin; "there, look at this Bates; he is at it again; a fellow that the very clown could never raise a laugh out of, and now I see him all night smirking, and grinning, and looking down like a jackdaw that has got his claw on a thimble. If you don't speak out, I'll knock your two tormenting skulls together till they roll off down the gutter side by side, chuckling and giggling all day and all night." At this direful mysterious threat Bates composed himself. "The power is all out of my body, sir, so now I can tell you."

He then in faint tones gave this explanation, which my guilty looks confirmed. "One of his bows is resined, sir, — that one is the tuner. I don't know whether you have observed, but he tunes rather louder than any

two of *us*. O dear, it is coming again."

"Don't be a fool, now. Yes, I have noticed that."

"The other bow, Mr. Chaplin, sir, the other bow is soaped — well soaped, sir, for orchestral use. Ugh! ugh!"

"O, the varmint!"

Bates continued. "You take a look at him, — you see him fingering and bowing like mad, — but as for sound, you know what a greasy bow is?"

"Of course I do. I don't wonder at your laughing — ha! ha! ha! O, the thief, — when I think of his diligent face, and him shaking his right wrist like Viotti."

"Mind your pockets, though; he knows too much."

It was now my turn to speak. "I am glad you like the idea, sir," said I, "for it comes from you."

"How can you say that?"

"What did you tell me to do?"

"I did n't tell you to do that. I don't remember what I told him, Bates, — not to the letter."

"Told me to play inaudible!!!"

"Well, I never," said Mr. Chaplin.

"Those were your words, sir; they did not fall to the ground, you see."

My position in this orchestra, and the situations that arose out of it, were meat and drink to my two friends. With the gentry, whose lives are a succession of amusements, a joke soon wears out, no doubt; but we poor fellows can't let one go cheap. How do we know how long it may be before Heaven sends us another? A joke falling among us is like a rat in a kennel of terriers.

At intricate passages the first violin used to look at the tenor, and then at me, and wink, and they both swelled with innocent enjoyment, till at last unknown powers of gayety budded in Bates. With quizzing his friend he learned to take a jest, so much so that one night, Mr. Yates being funnier than usual if possible, a single horse-laugh suddenly exploded among the fiddles. This was Bates gone off all in a moment after his trigger being pulled so many years to no purpose. Mr. Yates looked down with gratified surprise.

"Halloo! Brains got in the orchestra; after that, anything!"

But do you think it was fun to me all this? I declare I suffered the torture of the — you know what. I never felt safe a moment. I had placed myself next to an old fiddler who was deaf, but he somehow smelt at times that I was shirking, and then he used to cry, "Pull out, pull out; you don't pull out."

"How can you say so?" I used to reply, and then saw away like mad; when, so connected are the senses of sight and hearing apparently, the old fellow used to smile and be at peace. He saw me pull, and so he heard me pull out. Then sometimes friends of the other performers would be in the orchestra, and peep over me, and say civil things, and I wish them farther, civilities and all. But it is a fact that for two months I gesticulated in that orchestra without a soul finding out that I was not suiting the note to the action.

At last we broke up, to my great relief, but I did not leave the theatre. Mr. Widger, Mr. Yates's dresser, got me a place behind the scenes at nine shillings per week.

I used to dress Mr. Reeve, and run for his brandies and waters, which kept me on the trot, and do odd jobs.

But I was now to make the acquaintance that colored all my life, or the cream of it. My time was come to move in a wider circle of men and things, and really to do what so many fancy they have done, — to see the world.

In the month of April, 1828, Mr. Yates, theatrical manager, found his nightly receipts fall below his nightly expenses. In this situation, a manager falls upon one of two things, — a spectacle or a star. Mr. Yates preferred the latter, and went over to Paris and engaged Mademoiselle Djek.

Mademoiselle Djek was an elephant of great size and unparalleled sagacity. She had been for some time performing in a play at Franconi's, and created a great sensation in Paris.

Of her previous history little is known. But she was first landed from the East in England, and was shown about merely as an elephant by her proprietor, an Italian called Polito. The Frenchmen first found out her talent. Her present owner was a M. Huguet, and with him Mr. Yates treated. She joined the Adelphi company at a salary of £40 a week and her grub.

There was great expectation in the theatre for some days. The play in which she was to perform, "The Elephant of the King of Siam," was cast and rehearsed several times; a wooden house was built for her at the back of the stage, and one fine afternoon, sure enough, she arrived with all her train, one or two of each nation, viz., her owner, M. Huguet (French); her principal keeper, Tom Elliot (English); her subordinates, — Bernard, (French), and an Italian nicknamed Pippin. She arrived at the stage door in Maiden Lane, and soon after the messenger was sent to Mr. Yates's house.

"Elephant 's come, sir."

"Well, let them put her in the place built for her, and I 'll come and see her."

"They can't do that, sir."

"Why not?"

"La! bless you, sir, she might get her foot into the theatre, but how is her body to come through the stage door? Why, she is almost as big as the house."

Down comes Mr. Yates, and there was the elephant standing all across Maiden Lane, — all traffic interrupted except what could pass under her belly, — and such a crowd, — my eye!

Mr. Yates put his hands in his pockets and took a quiet look at the state of affairs.

"You must make a hole in the wall," said he.

Pickaxes went to work, and made a hole, or rather a frightful chasm, in the theatre, and when it looked about two thirds her size, Elliot said, "Stop!" He then gave her a sharp order, and the first specimen we saw of her cleverness was her doubling herself together and creeping in through that hole, bending her fore knees, and afterward rising and dragging her hind legs horizontally, and she disappeared like an enormous mole burrowing into the theatre.

Mademoiselle Djek's bills were posted all over the town, and everything done to make her take, and on the following Tuesday the theatre was pretty well filled by the public; the manager also took care to have a strong party in the pit. In short, she was nursed as other stars are upon their *début*.

Night came; all was anxiety behind the lights and expectation in front.

The green curtain drew up, and Mr. Yates walked on in black dress-coat and white kid gloves, like a private gentleman just landed out of a bandbox at the Queen's ball. He was the boy to talk to the public; soft sawder, — dignified reproach, — friendly intercourse, — he had them all at his fingers' ends. This time it was the easy tone of refined conversation upon the intelligent creature he was privileged to introduce to them. I remember his discourse as well as if it was yesterday.

"The elephant," said Mr. Yates, "is a marvel of Nature. We are now to have the pleasure of showing her to you as taking her place in art." Then he praised the wisdom and beneficence of creation. "Among the small animals, such as cats and men, there is to be found such a thing as spite; treachery ditto, and love of mischief, and even cruelty at odd times; but here is a creature with the power to pull down our houses about

our ears like Samson, but a heart that will not let her hurt a fly. Properly to appreciate her moral character, consider what a thing power is; see how it tries us, — how often in history it has turned men to demons. The elephant," added he, "is the friend of man by choice, not by necessity or instinct; it is born as wild as a lion or buffalo, but, the moment an opportunity arrives, its kindred intelligence allies it to man, its only superior or equal in reasoning power. We are about," said Mr. Yates, "to present a play in which an elephant will act a part, and yet act but herself, for the intelligence and affectionate disposition she will display on these boards as an actress are merely her own private and domestic qualities. Not every one of us actors, gentlemen, can say as much."

Then there was a laugh, in which Mr. Yates joined. In short, Mr. Yates, who could play upon the public ear better than some fiddles (I name no names), made his *débutante* popular before ever she stepped upon the scene. He then bowed with intense gratitude to the audience for the attention they had honored him with, retired to the prompter's side, and, as he reached it, the act drop flew up and the play began. It commenced on two legs; the elephant did not come on until the second scene of the act.

The drama was a good specimen of its kind. It was a story of some interest, and length, and variety, and the writer had been sharp enough not to make the elephant too common in it. She came on only three or four times, and always at a nick of time, and to do good business, — as theatricals say, i. e. for some important purpose in the story.

A king of Siam had lately died, and the elephant was seen taking her part in the funeral obsequies. She deposited his sceptre, etc., in the tomb of his fathers, and was seen no more in that act. The rightful heir to this throne was a young prince, to whom the elephant belonged. A usurper opposed him, and a battle took place; the rightful heir was worsted and taken prisoner; the usurper condemned him to be thrown into the sea. In the next act, this sentence was being executed: four men were discovered passing through a wood carrying no end of a box. Suddenly a terrific roar was heard; the men put down the box rather more carefully than they would in real life, and fled, and the elephant walked on to the scene alone like any other actress. She smelt about the box, and presently tore it open with her proboscis, and there was her master, the rightful heir, but in a sad exhausted state. When the good soul sees this, what does she do but walk to the other side, and tear down the bough of a fruit-tree and hand it to the sufferer? He sucked it, and it had the effect of stout on him: it made a man of him, and they marched away together, the elephant trumpeting to show her satisfaction.

In the next act the rightful heir's friends were discovered behind the bars of a prison at a height from the ground. The order for their execution arrived, and they were down upon their luck terribly. In marched the elephant, tore out the iron bars, and squeezed herself against the wall, half squatting in the shape of a triangle; so then the prisoners glided down her to the ground slantendicular one after another.

When the civil war had lasted long enough to sicken both sides, and enough widows and orphans had been made, the Siamese began to ask themselves, But what is it all about? The next thing was, they said, "What asses we have been! Was there no other way of deciding between two men but bleeding the whole tribe?" Then they reflected and said, We are asses, that is clear; but we hear there is one animal in the nation that is not an ass; why, of course, then she is the one to decide our dispute. Accordingly, a grand

assembly was held, the rival claimants were compelled to attend, and the elephant was led in. Then the high-priest, or some such article, having first implored Heaven to speak through the quadruped, bade her decide according to justice. No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the elephant stretched out her proboscis, seized a little crown that glittered on the usurper's head, and, waving it gracefully in the air, deposited it gently and carefully on the brows of the rightful heir. So then there was a rush made on the wrongful heir. He was taken out guarded, and warned off the premises; the rightful heir mounted the throne, and grinned and bowed all round, — the elephant trumpeted, — Siam hurrahed, — Djek's party in the house echoed the sound, and down came the curtain in thunders of applause. Though the curtain was down, the applause continued most vehemently, and after a while a cry arose at the back of the pit, "Elephant! Elephant!" That part of the audience that had paid at the door laughed at this, but their laughter turned to curiosity when, in answer to the cry, the curtain was raised, and the stage discovered empty. Curiosity in turn gave way to surprise, for the elephant walked on from the third grooves alone, and came slap down to the float. At this, the astonished public literally roared at her. But how can I describe the effect, the amazement, when, in return for the compliment, the *débutante* slowly bent her knees and courtesied twice to the British public, and then retired backwards as the curtain once more fell? People looked at one another, and seemed to need to read in their neighbors' eyes whether such a thing was real; and then followed that buzz which tells the knowing ones behind the curtain that the nail has gone home; that the theatre will be crammed to the ceiling to-morrow night, and perhaps for eighty nights after.

Mr. Yates fed Mademoiselle Djek with his own hand that night, crying, "O you duck!"

The fortunes of the Adelphi rose from that hour, — full houses without intermission.

Mr. Yates shortened his introductory address, and used to make it a brief, neat, and, I think, elegant eulogy of her gentleness and affectionate disposition; her talent "the public are here to judge for themselves," said Mr. Yates, and exit P. S.

A theatre is a little world, and Djek soon became the hero of ours. Everybody must have a passing peep at the star that was keeping the theatre open all summer, and providing bread for a score or two of families connected with it. Of course, a mind like mine was not among the least inquisitive. But her head-keeper, Tom Elliot, a surly fellow, repulsed our attempts to scrape acquaintance. "Mind your business, and I'll mind mine," was his chant. He seemed to be wonderfully jealous of her. He could not forbid Mr. Yates to visit her, as he did us, but he always insisted on being one of the party even then. He puzzled us; but the strongest impression he gave us was that he was jealous of her, — afraid that she would get as fond of some others as of him, and so another man might be able to work her, and his own nose lose a joint, as the saying is. Later on we learned to put a different interpretation on his conduct. Pippin the Italian, and Bernard the Frenchman, used to serve her with straw and water, etc., but it was quite a different thing from Elliot. They were like a fine lady's grooms and running footmen, but Elliot was her body-servant, groom of the bedchamber, or what not. He used always to sleep in the straw close to her. Sometimes, when he was drunk, he would roll in between her legs; and if she had not been more careful of him than any other animal ever was (especially himself), she must have crushed him to death three nights in the week. Next to Elliot, but a long

way below him, M. Huguet seemed her favorite. He used to come into her box, and caress her, and feed her, and make much of her; but she never went on the stage without Elliot in sight; and, in point of fact, all she did upon our stage was done at a word of command given then and there at the side by this man and no other, — going down to the float, courtesying, and all.

Being mightily curious to know how he had gained such influence with her, I made several attempts to sound him, but, drunk or sober, he was equally unfathomable on this point.

I then endeavored to slake my curiosity at No. 2. I made bold to ask M. Huguet how he had won her affections. The Frenchman was as communicative as the native was reserved. He broke plenty of English over me. It came to this, that the strongest feeling of an elephant was gratitude, and that he had worked on this for years; was always kind to her, and seldom approached her without giving her lumps of sugar, — carried a pocketful on purpose. This tallied with what I had heard and read of an elephant; still the problem remained, Why is she fonder still of this Tom Elliot, whose manner is not ingratiating, and who never speaks to her but in a harsh, severe voice?

She stood my friend, any way. A good many new supers were engaged to play with her, and I was set over these, looked out their dresses, and went on with them and her as a slave: nine shillings a week for this was added to my other nine which I drew for dressing an actor or two of the higher class.

The more I was about her, the more I felt that we were not at the bottom of this quadruped, nor even of her bipeds. There were gestures and glances and shrugs always passing to and fro among them.

One day at the rehearsal of a farce there was no Mr. Yates. Somebody inquired loudly for him.

"Hush!" says another; "have n't you heard?"

"No."

"You must n't talk of it out of doors."

"No!"

"Half killed by the elephant this morning."

It seems he was feeding and coaxing her, as he had often done before, when all in a moment she laid hold of him with her trunk and gave him a squeeze. He lay in bed six weeks with it, and there was nobody to deliver her eulogy at night. Elliot was at the other end of the stage when the accident happened. He heard Mr. Yates cry out, and ran in, and the elephant let Mr. Yates go the moment she saw him.

We questioned Elliot. We might as well have cross-examined the Monument. Then I inquired of M. Huguet what this meant. That gentleman explained to me that Djek had miscalculated her strength; that she wanted to caress so kind a manager, who was always feeding and courting her, and had embraced him too warmly.

The play went on, and the elephant's reputation increased. But her popularity was destined to receive a shock as far as we little ones behind the curtain were concerned.

One day while Pippin was spreading her straw, she knocked him down with her trunk, and, pressing her tooth against him, bored two frightful holes in his skull before Elliot could interfere. Pippin was carried to St. George's Hospital and we began to look in one another's faces.

Pippin's situation was in the market.

One or two declined it. It came down to me. I reflected, and accepted it: another nine shillings; total, twenty-seven shillings.

That night two supers turned tail. An actress also, whose name I have forgotten, refused to go on with her. "I was not engaged to play with a brute," said this lady, "and I won't."

Others went on as usual, but were not so sweet on it as before. The rightful heir lost all relish for his part, and, above all, when his turn came to be preserved from harm by her, I used to hear him crying out of the box to Elliot, "Are you there? are you sure you are there?" and, when she tore open his box, Garrick never acted better than this one used to now, for you see his cue was to exhibit fear and exhaustion, and he did both to the life, because for the last five minutes he had been thinking, "O dear! O dear! suppose she should do the foot business on my box instead of the proboscis business."

These, however, were vain fears. She made no mistake before the public.

Nothing lasts forever in this world, and the time came that she ceased to fill the house. Then Mr. Yates re-engaged her for the provinces, and, having agreed with the country managers, sent her down to Bath and Bristol first. He had a good opinion of me, and asked me to go with her and watch his interests. I should not certainly have applied for the place, but it was not easy to say no to Mr. Yates, and I felt I owed him some reparation for the wrong I had done that great artist in accompanying his voice with my gestures.

In short, we started, Djek, Elliot, Bernard, I, and Pippin, on foot (he was just out of St. George's). Messrs. Huguet and Yates rolled in their carriage to meet us at the principal towns where we played.

As we could not afford to make her common, our walking was all night-work, and introduced me to a rough life.

The average of night weather is wetter and windier than day, and many a vile night we tramped through when wise men were abed; and we never knew for certain where we should pass the night, for it depended on Djek. She was so enormous that half the inns could not find us a place big enough for her. Our first evening stroll was to Bath and Bristol; thence we crossed to Dublin, thence we returned to Plymouth. We walked from Plymouth to Liverpool, playing with good success at all these places. At Liverpool she laid hold of Bernard and would have settled his hash, but Elliot came between them.

That same afternoon in walks a young gentleman dressed in the height of Parisian fashion, — glossy hat, satin tie, trousers puckered at the haunches, — sprucer than any poor Englishman will be while the world lasts, and who was it but Mons. Bernard come to take leave? We endeavored to dissuade him. He smiled and shook his head, treated us, flattered us, and showed us his preparations for France.

All that day and the next he sauntered about us dressed like a gentleman, with his hands in his pockets, and an ostentatious neglect of his late affectionate charge. Before he left he invited me to drink something at his expense, and was good enough to say I was what he most regretted leaving.

"Then why go?" said I.

"I will tell you, mon pauvre garçon," said Mons. Bernard. "We old hands have all got our orders to say she is a duck. Ah! you have found that out of yourself. Well, now, as I have done with her, I will tell you a part of her character, for I know her well. Once she injures you she can never forgive you. So long as she has never hurt you there's a fair chance she never will. I have been about her for years, and she never molested me till yesterday. But, if she once attacks a man, that man's death-warrant is signed. I can't altogether account for it, but trust my experience, it is so. I would have stayed with you all my life if she had not shown me my fate, but not now. Merci! I have a wife and two children in France. I have saved some money out of her. I return to the bosom of my family; and if Pippin stays with her after the hint she gave him in London, why, you will see the death of Pippin, my lad,

voilà tont, that is if you don't go first. Qu'est que çà te fait à la fin? tu es garçon toi — buvons!"

The next day he left us, and left me sad for one. The quiet determination with which he acted upon positive experience of her was enough to make a man thoughtful; and then Bernard was the flower of us: he was the drop of mirth and gayety in our iron cup. He was a pure, unadulterated Frenchman; and, to be just, where can you find anything so delightful as a Frenchman — of the right sort?

He fluttered home singing,

"Les doux yeux de ma brunet—te,
Tout—e mignonett—e — tout—e — gentillett—e."

and left us all in black.

God bless you, my merry fellow. I hope you found your children healthy, and your brunette true, and your friends alive, and that the world is just to you, and smiles on you, as you do on it, and did on us.

From Liverpool we walked to Glasgow, from Glasgow to Edinburgh, and from Edinburgh on a cold starry midnight we started for Newcastle.

In this interval of business let me paint you my companions Pippin and Elliot. The reader is entitled to this, for there must have been something out of the common in their looks, since I was within an ace of being killed along of the Italian's face, and was imprisoned four days through the Englishman's mug.

The Italian whom we know by the nickname of Pippin was a man of immense stature and athletic mould. His face, once seen, would never be forgotten. His skin, almost as swarthy as Othello's, was set off by dazzling ivory teeth, and lighted by two glorious large eyes, black as jet, brilliant as diamonds; the orbs of black lightning gleamed from beneath eyebrows that many a dandy would have bought for mustaches at a high valuation. A nose like a reaping-hook completed him. Perch him on a tolerable-sized rock, and there you had a black eagle.

As if this was not enough, Pippin would always wear a conical hat; and, had he but stepped upon the stage in "Masaniello" or the like, all the other brigands would have sunk down to a rural police by the side of our man. But now comes the absurdity. His inside was not different from his out; it was the exact opposite. You might turn over twenty thousand bullet heads and bolus eyes before you could find one man so thoroughly harmless as this thundering brigand. He was just a pet, a universal pet of all the men and women that came near him. He had the disposition of a dove and the heart of a hare. He was a lamb in wolf's clothing.

My next portrait is not so pleasing.

A MAN TURNED BRUTE.

Some ten years before this, a fine stout young English rustic entered the service of Mademoiselle Djek. He was a model for bone and muscle, and had two cheeks like roses. When he first went to Paris he was looked on as a curiosity there. People used to come to Djek's stable to see her, and Elliot, the young English Samson. Just ten years after this young Elliot had got to be called "old Elliot." His face was not only pale, it was colorless; it was the face of a walking corpse. This came of ten years' brandy and brute. I have often asked people to guess the man's age, and they always guessed sixty, sixty-five, or seventy, — oftenest the latter.

He was thirty-five, — not a day more.

This man's mind had come down along with his body. He understood nothing but elephant; he seldom talked, and then nothing but elephant. He was an elephant-man. I will give you an instance which I always thought curious.

An elephant, you may have observed, cannot stand quite still. The great weight of its head causes a nodding movement, which is perpetual when the creature stands erect. Well, this Tom Elliot when he stood

up, used always to have one foot advanced, and his eyes half closed, and his head niddle-nodding like an elephant all the time; and, with it all, such a presence of brute and absence of soul in his mug, enough to give a thoughtful man some very queer ideas about man and beast.

CHAPTER VI.

My office in this trip was merely to contract for the elephant's food at the various places; but I was getting older and shrewder, and more designing than I used to be, and I was quite keen enough to see in this elephant the means of bettering my fortunes, if I could but make friends with her. But how to do this? She was like a coquette: strange admirers welcome; but when you had courted her awhile she got tired of you, and then nothing short of your demise satisfied her caprice. Her heart seemed inaccessible except to this brute Elliot, and he, drunk or sober, guarded the secret of his fascination by some instinct, for reason he possessed in a very small degree.

I played the spy on quadruped and biped, and I found out the fact, but the reason beat me. I saw that she was more tenderly careful of him than a mother of her child. I saw him roll down stupid drunk under her belly, and I saw her lift first one foot and then the other, and draw them slowly and carefully back, trembling with fear lest she might make a mistake and hurt him.

But why she was a mother to him and a step-mother to the rest of us, that I could not learn.

One day, between Plymouth and Liverpool, having left Elliot and her together, I happened to return, and I found the elephant alone and in a state of excitement, and looking in I observed some blood upon the straw.

His turn has come at last, was my first notion; but, looking round, there was Elliot behind me.

"I was afraid she had tried it on with you," I said.

"Who?"

"The elephant."

Elliot's face was not generally expressive, but the look of silent scorn he gave me at the idea of the elephant attacking him was worth seeing. The brute knew something I did not know, and could not find out; and from this one piece of knowledge he looked down upon me with a sort of contempt that set all the Seven Dials' blood on fire.

"I will bottom this," said I, "if I die for it."

My plan now was to feed Djek every day with my own hand, but never to go near her without Elliot at my very side and in front of the elephant.

This was my first step.

We were now drawing toward Newcastle, and had to lie at Morpeth, where we arrived late, and found Mr. Yates and M. Huguet, who had come out from Newcastle to meet us; and at this place I determined on a new move which I had long meditated.

Elliot, I reflected, always slept with the elephant. None of the other men had ever done this. Now might there not be some magic in this unbroken familiarity between the two animals?

Accordingly, at Morpeth, I pretended there was no bed vacant in the inn, and asked Elliot to let me lie beside him: he grunted an ungracious assent.

Not to overdo it at first, I got Elliot between me and Djek, so that if she was offended at my intrusion she must pass over her darling to resent it. We had tramped a good many miles, and were soon fast asleep.

About two in the morning I was awoke by a shout and a crunching, and felt myself dropping into the straw out of the elephant's mouth. She had stretched her proboscis over

him, — had taken me up so delicately that I felt nothing, and when Elliot shouted I was in her mouth. At his voice, that rung in my ears like the last trumpet, she dropped me like a hot potato. I rolled out of the straw, giving tongue a good one, and ran out of the shed. I had no sooner got to the inn than I felt a sickening pain in my shoulder and fainted away.

Her huge tooth had gone into my shoulder like a wedge. It was myself I had heard being crunched.

They did what they could for me, and I soon came to. When I recovered my senses I was seized with vomiting; but at last all violent symptoms abated, and I began to suffer great pain in the injured part, and did suffer for six weeks.

And so I scraped clear. Somehow or other, Elliot was not drunk, or nothing could have saved me. For a second wonder, he, who was a heavy sleeper, woke at the very slight noise she made eating me: a moment later, and nothing could have saved me. I use too many words, — suppose she had eaten me, — what then?

They told Mr. Yates at breakfast, and he sent for me, and advised me to lie quiet at Morpeth till the fever of the wound should be off me; but I refused. She was to start at ten, and I told him I should start with her.

Running from grim death like that, I had left my shoes behind in the shed, and M. Huguet sent his servant Baptiste, an Italian, for them.

Mr. Yates then asked me for all the particulars, and, while I was telling him and M. Huguet, we heard a commotion in the street, and saw people running, and presently one of the waiters ran in and cried: —

"The elephant has killed a man, or near it."

Mr. Yates laughed and said: —

"Not quite so bad as that; for here is the man."

"No, no," cried the waiter, "it is not him; it is one of the foreigners."

Mr. Yates started up all trembling. He ran to the stable. I followed him as I was, and there we saw a sight to make our blood run cold. On the corn-bin lay poor Baptiste crushed into a mummy. How it happened there was no means of knowing; but, no doubt, while he was groping in the straw for my wretched shoes, she struck him with her trunk, perhaps more than once; his breast-bones were broken to chips, and every time he breathed, which by God's mercy was not many minutes, the man's whole chest-frame puffed out like a bladder with the action of his lungs: it was too horrible to look at.

Elliot had run at Baptiste's cry, but too late to save his life this time. He had drawn the man out of the straw as she was about to pound him to a jelly, and there the poor soul lay on the corn-bin, and by his side lay the things he had died for, — two old shoes. Elliot had found them in the straw, and put them there of all places in the world.

By this time all Morpeth was out. They besieged the doors and vowed death to the elephant. M. Huguet became greatly alarmed. He could spare Baptiste, but he could not spare Djek. He got Mr. Yates to pacify the people. "Tell them something," said he.

"What on earth can I say for her over that man's bleeding body?" said Mr. Yates. "Curse her! would to God I had never seen her!"

"Tell them he used her cruel," said M. Huguet. "I have brought her off with that before now."

Well, my sickness came on again, partly, no doubt, by the sight and the remorse, and I was got to bed, and lay there some days; so I did not see all that passed, but I heard some, and I know the rest by instinct now.

Half an hour after breakfast-time Baptiste died. On this the elephant was detained by the authorities, and a coroner's inquest was summoned, and sat in the shambles on the victim, with the butcheress looking on at the proceedings.

Pippin told me she took off a jury-

man's hat during the investigation, waved it triumphantly in the air, and placed it cleverly on her favorite's head, old Tom.

At this inquest two or three persons deposed on oath that the deceased had ill used her more than once in France; in particular, that he had run a pitchfork into her two years ago; that he had been remonstrated with, but in vain; unfortunately, she had recognized him at once, and killed him out of revenge for past cruelty, or to save herself from fresh outrages.

This cooled the ardor against her. Some even took part with her against the man.

"Run a pitchfork into an elephant! O, for shame! no wonder she killed him at last. How good of her not to kill him then and there, — what forbearance, — forgave it for two years, ye see."

There is a fixed opinion among men that an elephant is a good kind creature. The opinion is fed by the proprietors of elephants, who must nurse the notion or lose their customers, and so a set tale is always ready to clear the guilty and criminate the sufferer; and this tale is greedily swallowed by the public. You will hear and read many such tales in the papers before you die. Every such tale is a lie.

How curiously things happen! Last year, i. e. more than twenty years after this event, my little girl went for a pound of butter to Newport Street. She brought it wrapped up in a scrap of a very old newspaper; in unrolling it, my eye, by mere accident, fell upon these words: "An inquest." I had no sooner read the paragraph than I put the scrap of paper away in my desk: it lies before me now, and I am copying it.

"An inquest was held at the Phœnix Inn, Morpeth, on the 27th ultimo, on view of the body of an Italian named Baptiste Bernard, who was one of the attendants on the female elephant which lately performed at the Adelphi. It appeared from the evidence that the man had stabbed the elephant in the trunk with a pitchfork about two years ago while in a state of intoxication, and that on the Tuesday previous to the inquest the animal caught hold of him with her trunk and did him so much injury that he died in a few hours. Verdict, died from the wounds and bruises received from the trunk of an elephant. Deodand, 5*s*."

Well, this has gone all abroad, for print travels like wind; and it is not fair to the friends and the memory of this Baptiste Bernard to print that he died by his own cruelty, or fault, or folly, so take my deposition, and carry it to Milan, his native city.

I declare upon oath that the above is a lie; that the man was never an attendant upon the female elephant; he was an attendant on the female Huguet; for he was that lady's footman. His first introduction to Mademoiselle Djek was her killing him, and he died, not by any fault of his own, but by the will of God and through ignorance of the real nature of the *full-grown elephant*, the cunningest, most treacherous and bloodthirsty beast that ever played the butcher among mankind.

What men speak dissolves in the air, what they print stands fast and will look them in the face to all eternity. I print the truth about this man's death; so help me God.

Business is business. As soon as we had got the inquest over and stamped the lie current, hid the truth and buried the man, we marched south and played our little play at Newcastle.

Deodand for a human soul sent by murder to its account, five bob.

After Newcastle we walked to York, and thence to Manchester. I crept along thoroughly crestfallen. Months and months I had watched, and spied, and tried to pluck out the heart of this Tom Elliot's mystery; I had failed. Months and months I had tried to gain some influence over Djek; I had failed. But for Elliot,

it was clear I should not live a single day within reach of her trunk; this brute was my superior. I was compelled to look up to him, and I *did look up to him.*

As I tramped sulkily along, my smarting shoulder reminded me that in elephant, as in everything else I had tried, I was Jack, not master.

The proprietors had their cause of discontent too. We had silenced the law, but we could not silence opinion. Somehow suspicion hung about her in the very air wherever she went. She never throve in the English provinces after the Morpeth job, and, finding this, Mr. Yates said: "O, hang her, she has lost her character here; send her to America." So he and M. Huguet joined partnership and took this new speculation on their shoulders. America was even in that day a great card if you went with an English or French reputation.

I had been thinking of leaving her and her old Tom in despair; but, now that other dangers and inconveniences were to be endured besides her and her trunk, by some strange freak of human nature, or by fate, I began to cling to her like a limpet to a rock the more you pull at him.

Mr. Yates dissuaded me. "Have nothing to do with her, Jack; she will serve you like all the rest. Stay at home, and I'll find something for you in the theatre."

I thought a great deal of Mr. Yates for this, for he was speaking against his own interest. I was a faithful servant to him, and he needed one about her. Many a five-pound note I had saved him already, and well he deserved it at my hands.

"No, sir," I said, "I shall be of use, and I can't bear to be nonplushed by two brutes like Elliot and her. I have begun to study her, and I must go on to the word 'finis'!"

Messrs. Yates and Huguet insured the elephant for £20,000, and sent us all to sea together in the middle of November, a pretty month to cross the Atlantic in.

This was what betters call a hedge, and not a bad one.

Our party was Queen Djek; Mr. Stevenson, her financier; Mr. Gallott, her stage-manager and wrongful heir; Elliot, her keeper, her lord, her king; Pippin, her slave, always trembling for his head; myself, her commissariat; and one George Hinde, from Wombwell's, her man-of-all-work.

She had a stout cabin built upon deck for her. It cost £40 to make; what she paid for the accommodation Heaven knows, but I should think a good round sum, for it was the curse of the sailors and passengers, and added fresh terrors to navigation. The steersman could not see the ship's head until the sea took the mariners' part and knocked it into toothpicks.

Captain Sebor had such a passage with us as he had never encountered before. He told us so, — and no wonder; he never had such a wholesale murderess on board before, — contrary winds forever, and stiff gales too. At last it blew great guns; and one night, as the sun went down crimson in the Gulf of Florida, the sea running mountains high, I saw Captain Sebor himself was fidgety. He had cause. That night a tempest came on; the "Ontario" rolled fearfully and groaned like a dying man; about two in the morning a sea struck her, smashed Djek's cabin to atoms, and left her exposed and reeling; another such would now have swept her overboard, but her wits never left her for a moment. She threw herself down flatter than any man could have conceived possible; out went all her four legs, and she glued her belly to the deck; the sailors passed a chain from the weather to the lee bulwarks, and she seized it with her proboscis, and held on like grim death. Poor thing, her coat never got not to say dry; she was like a great water-rat all the rest of the voyage.

The passage was twelve weeks of foul weather. The elephant began to be suspected of being the cause of this, and the sailors often looked askant at her, and said we should never see port till she walked the plank into the Atlantic. If her underwriters saved their twenty thousand pounds, it was touch and go more than once or twice. Moreover, she ate so little all the voyage that it was a wonder to Elliot and me how she came not to die of sickness and hunger. I suppose she survived it all because she had more mischief to do.

As the pretty little witches sing in Mr. Locke's opera of "Macbeth,"

She must, she must, she must, she must, she must shed — much — more — blood.

CHAPTER VII.

Our preposterous long voyage deranged all the calculations that had been made for us in England, and we reached New York just at the wrong time. We found Master Burke playing at the Park Theatre, and we were forced to treat with an inferior house, the Bowery Theatre. We played there with but small success compared with what we had been used to in Europe. Master Burke filled the house, — we did not fill ours, — so that at last she was actually eclipsed by a human actor; to be sure it was a boy, not a man, and child's play is sometimes preferred by the theatre-going world even to horse-play.

The statesmen were cold to us; they had not at this time learned to form an opinion of their own at sight on such matters, and we did not bring them an overpowering European verdict to which they had nothing to do but sign their names. There was no groove cut for the mind to run in, and while they hesitated the speculation halted. I think she would succeed there now; but at this time they were not ripe for an elephant.

We left New York, and away to Philadelphia on foot and steamboat.

There is a place on the Delaware where the boat draws up to a small pier. Down this we marched, and about ten yards from the end the floor gave way under her weight, and Djek and her train fell into the sea. I was awoke from a revery, and found myself sitting right at top of her, with my knees in Chesapeake Bay. Elliot had a rough Benjamin on, and as he was coming thundering down with the rest of the rubbish, alive and dead, it caught in a nail, and he hung over the bay by the shoulder like an Indian fakir, cursing and swearing for all the world like a dog barking. I never saw such a posture, — and O, the language!

I swam out, but Djek was caught in a trap between the two sets of piles. The water was about two feet over her head, so that every now and then she disappeared, and then striking the bottom she came up again, plunging, and rolling, and making waves like a steamboat. Her trunk she kept vertical, like the hose of a diving-bell, and O, the noises that came up from the bottom of the sea through that flesh-pipe! For about four hours she went up and down the gamut of "O Lord, what shall I do?" more than a thousand times, I think. We brought ropes to her aid, and boats and men, and tried all we knew to move her, but in vain; and when we had exhausted our sagacity she drew upon a better bank, — her own. Talk of brutes not being able to reason, — gammon. Djek could reason like Solomon; for each fresh difficulty she found a fresh resource. On this occasion she did what I never saw her do before or since: she took her enormous skull, and used it as a battering-ram against the piles; two of them resisted — no wonder — they were about eight inches in diameter; the third snapped like glass, and she plunged through and waddled on

shore. I met her with a bucket of brandy and hot water — stiff.

Ladies, who are said to sip this compound in your bondoirs while your husbands are smoking at the clubs, but I don't believe it of you, learn how this lady disposed of her wooden tumbler full. She thrust her proboscis into it. Whis—s—s—s—p! now it is all in her trunk. Whis—s—s—sh! now it is all in her abdomen: one breath drawn and exhaled sent it from the bucket home. This done, her eye twinkled, and she trumpeted to the tune of "All is well that ends well."

I should weary the reader were I to relate at length all the small incidents that befell us in the United States.

The general result was failure, loss of money, our salaries not paid up, and fearful embarrassments staring us in the face. We scraped through without pawning the elephant, but we were often on the verge of it. All this did not choke my ambition. Warned by the past, I never ventured near her (unless Elliot was there) for twelve months after our landing; but I was always watching Elliot and her to find the secret of his influence.

A fearful annoyance to the leaders of the speculation was the drunkenness of Old Tom and George Hinde: these two encouraged one another and defied us, and of course they were our masters, because no one but Elliot could move the elephant from place to place, or work her on the stage.

One night Elliot was so drunk that he fell down senseless at the door of her shed on his way to repose. I was not near, but Mr. Gallott it seems was, and he told us she put out her proboscis, drew him tenderly in, laid him on the straw, and flung some straw over him or partly over him. Mr. Gallott is alive, and a public character; you can ask him whether this is true: I tell this one thing on hearsay.

Not long after this, in one of the American towns, I forget which, passing by Djek's shed, I heard a tremendous row. I was about to call Elliot, thinking it was the old story, somebody getting butchered; but, I don't know how it was, something stopped me, and I looked cautiously in instead, and saw Tom Elliot walking into her with a pitchfork, she trembling like a school-boy with her head in a corner, and the blood streaming from her sides. As soon as he caught sight of me he left off and muttered unintelligibly. I said nothing. I thought the more.

CHAPTER VIII.

We had to go by water to a place called City Point, and thence to Pittsville. I made a mistake as to the hour the boat started, and Djek and Co. went on board without me.

Well, you will say I could follow by the next boat. But how about the tin to pay the passage? My pocket was dry, and the treasurer gone on. But I had a good set of blacking-brushes; so sold them, and followed on with the proceeds — got to City Point. Elephant gone on to Pittsville; that I expected. Twenty miles or so I had to tramp on an empty stomach. And now does n't the Devil send me a fellow who shows me a short cut through a wood to Pittsville: into the wood I go. I thought it was to be like an English wood, — out of the sun into a pleasant shade, and, by then you are cool, into the world again. Instead of that, "the deeper, the deeper you are in it," as the song of the bottle says, the farther you were from getting out of it. Presently two roads instead of one, and then I knew I was done. I took one road: it twisted like a serpent. I had not been half an hour on it before I lost all the points of the compass. Says I, I don't know whether I ever shall see daylight again; but if I do, City Point will be the first thing I

shall see. You mark my words, said I.

So here was I lost in what they call a wood out there, but we should call a forest at home. And now, being in the heart of it, I got among the devilishest noises, and nothing to be seen to account for them; little feet suddenly pattering and scurrying along the ground, wings flapping out of trees; but what struck most awe into a chap from the Seven Dials was the rattle, — the everlasting rattle, and nothing to show. Often I have puzzled myself what this rattle could be. It was like a thousand rattlesnakes, and did n't I wish I was in the Seven Dials, though some get lost in them for that matter. After all, I think it was only insects, but insects by billions; you never heard anything like it in an English wood.

Just as I was losing heart in this enchanted wood, I heard an earthly sound, the tramp of a horse's foot. It was music.

But the leaves were so thick I could not see where the horse was; he seemed to get farther off, and then nearer. At last the sound came so close I made a run, burst through a lot of green leaves, and came out plump on a man riding a gray cob. He up with the but-end of his whip to fell me, but seeing I was respectable, "Halloo! stranger," says he, "guess you sort o' startled me." "Beg pardon, sir," says I, "but I have lost my way." "I see you are a stranger," said he.

So then he asked me where I was bound for, and I told him Pittsville.

I won't insult the reader by telling him what he said about the course I had been taking through the wood. I might as well tell him his A B C, or which side his bread and butter falls in the dust on. Then he asked me who I was. So I told him I was one of the elephant's domestics, leastways I did not word it so candid: "I was in charge of the elephant, and had taken a short cut."

Now he had heard of Djek, and seen her bills up, so he knew it was all right. "How am I to find my way out, sir?" said I. "Find your way out?" said he. "You will never find your way out." Good news, that.

He thought a bit; then he said: "The best thing you can do is to come home with me, and to-morrow I will send you on."

I could have hugged him.

"You had better walk behind me," says he; "my pony bites." So I tramped astern; and on we went, patter, patter, patter through the wood. At first I felt as jolly as a sandboy marching behind the pony; but when we had pattered best part of an hour, I began to have my misgivings. In all the enchanted woods ever I had read of, there was a small trifle of a wizard or ogre that took you home and settled your hash. Fee faw fum, I smell the blood of an Englishmun, etc.

And still on we pattered, and the sun began to decline, and the wood to darken, and still we pattered on. I was just thinking of turning tail and slipping back among the panthers, and mosquitoes, and rattlesnakes, when, O be joyful, we burst on a clearing, and there was a nice house in the middle of it, and out came the dogs jumping to welcome us, and niggers no end with white eyeballs and grinders like snow.

They pulled him off his horse, and in we went. There was his good lady, and his daughter, — a beautiful girl, and such a dinner. We sat down, and I maintained a modest taciturnity for some minutes: "The silent hog eats the most acorns." After dinner he shows me all manner of ways of mixing the grog, and I show him one way of drinking it, — when you can get it. Then he must hear about the elephant. So I tell him the jade's history, but bind him to secrecy.

Then the young lady puts in. "So you are really an Englishman?" and she looks me all over.

"That you may take your oath of, miss," says I.

"Oh!" says she, and smiles. I did not take it up at first, but I see what it was now. Me standing five feet four, I did not come up to her notion of the Father of all Americans. "Does this great people spring from such a little stock as we have here?" thinks my young lady. I should have up and told her the pluck makes the man, and not the inches; but I lost that chance. Then, being pressed with questions, I told them all my adventures, and they hung on my words. It was a new leaf to them, I could see that.

The young lady's eyes glittered like two purple stars at a stranger with the gift of the gab that had seen so much life as I had, and midnight came in on time. Then I was ushered to bed. Now up to that time I had always gone to roost without pomp or ceremony; sometimes with a mould candle, but oftener a farthing dip, which I *have* seen it dart its beams out of a bottle instead of a flat candlestick.

This time a whole cavalcade of us went up the stairs: one blackie marched in my van with two lights, two blackies brought up my rear. They showed me into a beautiful room, and stood in the half-light with eyes and teeth like red-hot silver, glittering and diabolical. I thought, of course, they would go away now. Not they. Presently one imp of darkness brings me a chair.

I sit down, and wonder. Other two lay hold of my boots and whip them off. This done, they buzz about me like black and white fiends, fidgeting, till I longed to punch their heads. They pull my coat off and my trousers; then they hoist me into bed: this done, first one makes a run and tucks me in, and grins over me diabolical; then another comes like a battering-ram, and tucks me in tighter. Fiend 3 looks at the work, and puts the artful touches at the corners, and behold me wedged, and then the beneficent fiends mizzled with a hearty grin that seemed to turn them all ivory. I could not believe my senses: I had never been tucked in since my mother's time.

In the morning, struggled out, and came down to breakfast. Took leave of the good Samaritan, who appointed two of my niggers to see me out of the wood; made my bow to the ladies, and away with a grateful heart. The niggers conducted me clear of the wood and set me on the broad road. Then came one of the pills a poor fellow has to stomach. I had made friends with the poor darkies, and now I had not even a few pence to give them, and such a little would have gone so far with them! I have often felt the bitterness of poverty, but never I do think as when I parted with my poor niggers at the edge of the wood, and was forced to see them go slowly home without a farthing.

I wish these few words could travel across the water, and my good host might read them, and see I have not forgotten him all these years. But, dear heart! you may be sure he is not upon the earth now. It is years ago, and a man that had the heart to harbor a stranger and a wanderer, why, he would be one of the first to go.

We steamed and tramped up and down the United States of America. On our return to Norfolk she broke loose at midnight, slipped into the town, took up the trees on the Boulevard and strewed them flat, went into the market, broke into a vegetable shop, munched the entire stock, next to a coachmaker's, took off a carriage-wheel, opened the door, stripped the cushions, and we found her eating the stuffing.

One day at noon we found ourselves fourteen miles from the town, I forget its name, we had to play in that very night. Mr. Gallott had gone on to rehearse, etc., and it behooved us to be marching after him. At this juncture, old Tom, being rather drunk, feels a strong desire to

be quite drunk, and refuses to stir from his brandy and water. Our exchequer was in no condition to be trifled with thus: if Elliot & Co. became helpless for an hour or two, we should arrive too late for the night's performance, and Djek eating her head off all the while. I coaxed and threatened our two brandy sponges, but in vain; they stuck and sucked. I was in despair, and, being in despair, came to a desperate resolution: I determined to try and master her myself then and there, and to defy these drunkards.

I told Pippin my project. He started back aghast. He viewed me in the light of a madman. "Are you tired of your life?" said he. But I was inflexible. Seven Dials pluck was up. I was enraged with my drunkards, and I was tired of waiting so many years the slave of a quadruped whose master was a brute.

Elephants are driven with a rod of steel sharpened at the end; about a foot from the end of this weapon is a large hook; by sticking this hook into an elephant's ear, and pulling it, you make her sensible which way you want her to go, and persuade her to comply.

Armed with this tool, I walked up to Djek's shed, and, in the most harsh and brutal voice I could command, bade her come out. She moved in the shed, but hesitated. I repeated the command still more repulsively, and out she came toward me very slowly.

With beasts such as lions, tigers, and elephants, great promptitude is the thing. Think for them! don't give *them* time to think, or their thoughts may be evil. I had learned this much, so I introduced myself by driving the steel into Djek's ribs, and then hooking her ear, while Pippin looked down from a first-story window. If Djek had known how my heart was beating she would have killed me then and there; but, observing no hesitation on my part, she took it all as a matter of course, and walked with me like a lamb. I found myself alone with her on the road, and fourteen miles of it before us. It was a serious situation, but I was ripe for it now. All the old women's stories and traditions about an elephant's character had been driven out of me by experience and washed out with blood. I had fathomed Elliot's art. I had got what the French call the riddle-key of Mademoiselle Djek, and that key was "steel"!

On we marched, the best of friends. There were a number of little hills on the road, and as we mounted one, a figure used to appear behind us on the crest of the last between us and the sky: this was the gallant Pippin, solicitous for his friend's fate, but desirous of not partaking it if adverse. And still the worthy Djek and I marched on the best of friends. About a mile out of the town, she put out her trunk and tried to curl it round me in a caressing way. I met this overture by driving the steel into her till the blood squirted out of her. If I had not, the siren would have killed me in the course of the next five minutes. Whenever she relaxed her speed I drove the steel into her. When the afternoon sun smiled gloriously on us, and the poor thing felt nature stir in her heart, and began to frisk in her awful clumsy way, pounding the great globe, I drove the steel into her; if I had not, I should not be here to relate this sprightly narrative.

Meantime, at ——, her stage-manager and financier were in great distress and anxiety; four o'clock, and no elephant. At last they got so frightened, they came out to meet us, and presently, to their amazement and delight, Djek strode up with her new general. Their ecstasy was great to think that the whole business was no longer at a drunkard's mercy. "But how did you manage? How ever did ye win her heart?" "With this," said I, and showed them the bloody steel.

We had not been in the town half

an hour before Tom and George came in. They were not so drunk but what they trembled for their situations after my exploit, and rolled and zigzagged after us as fast as they could.

By these means I rose from mademoiselle's slave to be her friend and companion.

CHAPTER IX.

This feat kept my two drunkards in better order, and revived my own dormant ambition. I used now to visit her by myself, steel in hand, to feed her, etc., and scrape acquaintance with her by every means, — steel in hand. One day I was feeding her, when suddenly I thought a house had fallen on me. I felt myself crashing against the door, and there I was lying upon it in the passage with all the breath driven clean out of my body. Pippin came and lifted me up and carried me into the air. I thought I should have died before breath could get into my lungs again. She had done this with a push from the thick end of her proboscis. After a while I came to. I had no sooner recovered my breath than I ran into the stable, and came back with a pitchfork. Pippin saw my intention and implored me, for Heaven's sake, not to. I would not listen to him: he flung his arms round me. I threatened to turn the fork on him if he did not let me go.

"Hark!" said he; and sure enough, there she was snorting and getting up her rage. "I know all about that," said I; "my death-warrant is drawn up, and if I don't strike it will be signed. This is how she has felt her way with all of them before she has killed them. I have but one chance of life," said I, "and I won't throw it away without a struggle." I opened the door, and, with a mind full of misgivings, I walked quickly up to her. I did not hesitate to raise the question which of us two was to suffer, I knew that would not do. I sprang upon her like a tiger, and drove the pitchfork into her trunk. She gave a yell of dismay and turned a little from me; I drove the fork into her ear.

Then came out her real character.

She wheeled round, ran her head into a corner, stuck out her great buttocks, and trembled all over like a leaf. I stabbed her with all my force for half an hour till the blood poured out of every square foot of her huge body, and, during the operation, she would have crept into a nutshell if she could. I filled her as full of holes as a cloved orange.

The blood that trickled out of her saved mine; and, for the first time, I walked out of her shambles her master.

One year and six months after we had landed at New York to conquer another hemisphere, we turned tail and sailed for England again. We had a prosperous voyage, with the exception of one accident. George Hinde, from incessant brandy, had delirium tremens, and one night, in a fit of it, he had just sense enough to see that he was hardly to be trusted with the care of himself. "John," said he to me, "tie me to this mast hand and foot." I demurred; but he begged me for Heaven's sake, so I bound him hand and foot as per order. This done, some one called me down below, and while I was there it seems George got very uncomfortable, and began to halloo and complain. Up comes the captain, — sees a man lashed to the mast. "What game is this?" says he. "It is that little blackguard John," says Hinde; "he caught me sleeping against the mast, and took a mean advantage; do loose me, captain!" The captain made sure it was a sea-jest, and loosed him with his own hands. "Thank you, captain," says George, "you are a good fellow. God bless you all!" and with these words he ran aft and jumped into the sea. A Yankee sailor made a grab at him and just touched his coat, but it was too late

to save him, and we were going before the wind ten knots an hour. Thus George Hinde fell by brandy; his kindred spirit, old Tom, seemed ready to follow, without the help of water, salt or fresh. This man's face was now a uniform color, white, with a scarce perceptible bluish-yellowish tinge. He was a moving corpse.

Drink forever! it makes men thieves, murderers, asses, and paupers; but what about that? so long as it sends them to an early grave with "beast" for their friends to write over their tombstones, unless they have a mind to tell lies in a churchyard, and that is a common trick.

We arrived at the mouth of the Thames.

Some boats boarded us with fresh provisions and delicacies; among the rest, one I had not tasted for many a day: it is called soft-tommy at sea, and on land bread. The merchant stood on tiptoe and handed a loaf toward me, and I leaned over the bulwarks and stretched down to him with a shilling in my hand. But, as ill luck would have it, the shilling slipped from my fingers and fell. If it had been some men's it would have fallen into the boat, others' into the sea, slap; but it was mine, and so it fell on the boat's very rim, and then danced to its own music into the water. I looked after it in silence; a young lady with whom I had made some little acquaintance during the voyage happened to be at my elbow, and she laughed most merrily as the shilling went down. I remember being astonished that she laughed. The man still held out the bread, but I shook my head. "I must go without now," said I; the young lady was quite surprised. "Why, it is worth a guinea," cried she. "Yes, miss," said I, sheepishly, "but we can't always have what we like, you see; I ought to have held my shilling tighter."

"Your shilling," cries she. "Oh!" and she dashed her hand into her pocket and took out her purse, and I could see her beautiful white fingers tremble with eagerness as they dived among the coin. She soon bought the loaf, and, as she handed it to me, I happened to look in her face, and her cheek was red and her eyes quite brimming. Her quick woman's heart had told her the truth, that it was a well-dressed and tolerably well-behaved man's last shilling, and he returning after years of travel to his native land.

I am sure, until the young lady felt for me, I thought nothing of it; I had been at my last shilling more than once. But when I saw she thought it hard, I began to think it was hard, and I remember the water came into my own eyes. Heaven bless her, and may she never want a shilling in her pocket, nor a kind heart near her to show her the world is not all made of stone.

We had no money to pay our passage, and we found Mr. Yates somewhat embarrassed. We had cost him a thousand or two, and no return; so, while he wrote to Mons. Huguet, that came to pass in England which we had always just contrived to stave off abroad.

The elephant was pawned.

And now I became of use to the proprietors. I arranged with the mortgagees, and they made the spout a show-place. I used to exhibit her and her tricks, and with the proceeds I fed her and Elliot and myself.

We had been three weeks in pledge, when, one fine morning, as I was showing off seated on the elephant's back, I heard a French exclamation of surprise and joy; I looked down, and there was M. Huguet. I came down to him, and he, whose quick eye saw a way through me out of drunken Elliot, gave a loose to his feelings, and embraced me à la Française, "which made the common people very much to admire," as the song has it; also a polite howl of derision greeted our Continental affection. M. Huguet put his hand into his pocket, and we got out of limbo,

and were let loose upon suffering humanity once more.

They talk as if English gold did everything; but it was French gold bought us off, I know that, for I saw it come out of his pocket.

As soon as we were redeemed, we took an engagement at Astley's, and, during this engagement, cadaverous Tom, finding we could master her, used to attend less and less to her and more and more to brandy.

A certain baker, who brought her loaves every morning for breakfast, used to ask me to let him feed her himself. He admired her, and took this way of making her fond of him. One day I had left these two friends and their loaves together for a minute, when I heard a fearful cry. I knew the sound too well by this time, and, as I ran back, I had the sense to halloo at her: this saved the man's life. At the sound of my voice she dropped him from a height of about twelve feet, and he rolled away like a ball of worsted. I dashed in, up with the pitchfork, and into her like lightning, and, while the blood was squirting out of her from a hundred little prong-holes, the poor baker limped away.

Any gentleman or lady who wishes to know how a man feels when seized by an elephant, preparatory to being squelched, can consult this person; he is a respectable tradesman; his name is Johns; he lives near Astley's Theatre, or used to, and for obvious reasons can tell you this one anecdote out of many such better than I can; that is if he has not forgotten it, and *I dare say he has n't* — ask him!

After Astley's, Drury Lane engaged us to play second to the Lions of Mysore; rather a down-come; but we went. In this theatre we behaved wonderfully. Notwithstanding the number of people continually buzzing about us, we kept our temper, and did not smash a single one of these human gnats, so trying to our little female irritability and feeble nerves. The only thing we did wrong was, we broke through a granite mountain and fell down on to the plains, and hurt our knee, and broke one super, — only one.

The Lions of Mysore went a starring to Liverpool, and we accompanied them. While we were there the cholera broke out in England, and M. Huguet summoned us hastily to France. We brushed our hats, put on our gloves, and walked at one stretch from Liverpool to Dover. There we embarked for Boulogne: Djek, cadaverous Tom, wolf-skin-lamb Pippin, and myself. I was now in Huguet's service at fifty francs a week as coadjutor and successor of cadaverous Tom, whose demise was hourly expected even by us who were hardened by use to his appearance, which was that of the ghost of delirium tremens. We arrived off Boulogne Pier; but there we were boarded by men in uniforms and mustaches, and questions put about the cholera, which disease the civic authorities of Boulogne were determined to keep on the other side of the Channel. The captain's answer proving satisfactory, we were allowed to run into the port.

In landing anywhere Djek and her attendants had always to wait till the other passengers had got clear, and we did so on this occasion. At length our turn came; but we had no sooner crossed the gangway and touched French ground than a movement took place on the quay, and a lot of bayonets bristled in our faces, and "Halte là!" was the word. We begged an explanation; in answer, an officer glared with eyes like saucers, and pointed with his finger at Elliot. The truth flashed on us. The Frenchmen were afraid of cholera coming over from England, and here was a man who looked plague, cholera, or death himself in person. We remonstrated through an interpreter, but Tom's face was not to be refuted by words. Some were for sending us back home to so

diseased a country as this article must have come out of; but milder measures prevailed. They set apart for our use a little corner of the quay, and there they roped us in and sentinelled us. And so for four days, in the polished kingdom of France, we dwelt in a hut ruder far than any on the banks of the Ohio. Drink forever! At last, as Tom Coffin got neither a worse nor a better color, they listened to reason, and let us loose upon the nation at large, and away we tramped for Paris.

Times were changed with us in one respect: we no longer marched to certain victory; our long ill-success in America had lessened our arrogance, and we crept along toward Paris. But, luckily for us, we had now a presiding head, and a good one. The soul of business is puffing, and no man puffed better than our chief, M. Huguet. Half-way between Boulogne and Paris we were met by a cavalier carrying our instructions how we were to enter Paris; and, arrived at St. Denis, instead of going straight on, we skirted the town, and made our formal entry by the Bois de Boulogne and the Arch of Triumph. Huguet had come to terms with Franconi, and, to give Djek's engagement more importance, Franconi's whole troop were ordered out to meet us and escort us in. They paraded up and down the Champs Elysées first, to excite attention and inquiry, and when the public were fairly agog our cavalcade formed outside the barrier, and came glittering and prancing through the arch. An elephant has her ups and downs like the rest. Djek, the despised of Kentucky and Virginia, burst on Paris the centre of a shining throng. Franconi's bright amazons and exquisite cavaliers rode to and fro our line, carrying sham messages with earnest faces; Djek was bedecked with ribbons, and seemed to tread more majestically, and our own hearts beat higher, as amid grace, and beauty, and pomp, sun shining — hats waving — feathers bending — mob cheering — trumpets crowing — and flints striking fire, we strode proudly into the great city, the capital of pleasure.

CHAPTER X.

These were bright days to me. I was set over old Tom, — fancy that; and my salary doubled his. I had fifty francs a week, and cleared as much more by showing her privately in her stable.

Money melts in London, — it evaporates in Paris. Pippin was a great favorite both with men and women behind the scenes at Franconi's. He introduced me to charming companions of both sexes; gayety reigned, and tin and morals "made themselves air, into which they vanished." Shakespeare.

Toward the close of her engagement Djek made one of her mistakes; she up with her rightful heir and broke his ribs against the side scenes.

We nearly had to stop her performances; we could not mend our rightful heir by next night, and substitutes did not pour in. "I won't go on with her," "I won't play with her," was a cry that even the humblest and neediest began to raise. I am happy to say that she was not under my superintendence when this rightful heir came to grief.

And now the cholera came to Paris, and theatricals of all sorts declined, for there was a real tragedy playing in every street. The deaths were very numerous, and awfully sudden; people were struck down in the streets as if by lightning; gloom and terror hung over all.

When this terrible disease is better known it will be found to be of the nature of strong poison, and its cure, if any, will be strychnine, belladonna, or, likelier still, some quick and deadly mineral poison that kills the healthy with cramps and discoloration.

In its rapid form cholera is not to

be told from quick poison, and hence sprung up among the lower order in Paris a notion that wholesale poisoning was on foot.

Pippin and I were standing at the door of a wine-shop, waiting for our change. His wild appearance attracted first one and then another. Little knots of people collected and eyed us; then they began to talk and murmur, and cast suspicious glances. "Come away," said Pippin, rather hastily. We walked off; they walked after us, increasing like a snowball, and they murmured louder and louder. I asked Pippin what the fools were gabbling about. He told me they suspected us of being the poisoners. At this I turned round, and, being five feet four, and English, was for punching some of their heads; but the athletic, pacific Italian would not hear of it, much less co-operate; and now they surrounded us just at the corner of one of the bridges, lashing themselves into a fury, and looking first at us, and then at the river below. Pippin was as white as death, and I thought it was all up myself, when by good luck a troop of mounted *gendarmes* issued from the palace. Pippin hailed them; they came up, and, after hearing both sides, took us under their protection, and off we marched between two files of cavalry, followed by the curses of a superficial populace. Extremes don't do. Pippin was the color of ink, Elliot of paper; both their mugs fell under suspicion, and nearly brought us to grief.

Franconi closed, and Djek, Huguet, and Co. started on a provincial tour.

They associated themselves on this occasion with Michelet, who had some small wild animals, such as lions, tigers, and leopards.

Our first move was to Versailles. Here we built a show-place and exhibited Djek, not as an actress, but as a private elephant, in which capacity she did the usual elephant business, besides a trick or two that most of them have not brains enough for, whereof anon.

Michelet was the predecessor of Van Amburgh and Carter, and did everything they do a dozen years before they were ever heard of; used to go into the lions' den, pull them about, and put his head down their throats, and their paws round his neck, etc., etc.

I observed this man, and learned something from him. Besides that general quickness and decision which is necessary with wild animals, I noticed that he was always on the lookout for mischief, and always punished it before it came. Another point, he always attacked the offending part, and so met the evil in front; for instance, if one of his darlings curled a lip and showed a tooth, he hit him over the mouth that moment and nowhere else; if one elongated a claw, he hit him over the foot like lightning. He read the whole crew as I had learned to read Djek, and conquered their malice by means of that marvellous cowardice which they all show if they can see no signs of it in you.

There are no two ways with wild beasts. If there is a single white spot in your heart, leave them, for your life will be in danger every moment. If you can despise them, and keep the rod always in sight, they are your humble servants; nobody more so.

Our exhibition, successful at first, began to flag; so that the fertile brain of M. Huguet had to work. He proposed to his partner to stand a tiger, and he would stand a bull, and "we will have a joint-stock fight like the King of Oude." Michelet had his misgivings, but Huguet overruled him. That ingenious gentleman then printed bills advertising for a certain day a fight between a real Bengal tiger and a ferocious bull that had just gored a man to death. This done, he sent me round the villages to find and hire a bull. "Mind you get a mild one, or I shall have to pay for a hole in the tiger's leather." I found one which the owner consented to risk for so much money down, and the dam-

age he should sustain from tiger to be valued independently by two farmers after the battle.

The morning of the fight Pippin and I went for our bull, and took him out of the yard towards Versailles; but when we had gone about two hundred yards, he became uneasy, looked round, sniffed about, and finally turned round spite of all our efforts, and paced home again. We remonstrated with the proprietor. "O," said he, "I forgot; he won't start without the wench." So the wench in question was sent for (his companion upon amatory excursions). She went with us, and launched us toward Versailles. This done, she returned home, and we marched on; but before we had gone a furlong Taurus showed symptoms of uneasiness; these increased, and at last he turned round and walked tranquilly home. We hung upon him, thrashed him, and bullied him, all to no purpose. His countenance was placid, but his soul resolved, and — he walked home, slowly, but inevitably; so then, there was nothing for it but to let him have the wench all the way to the tiger, and she would not go to Versailles till she had put on some new finery, — short waist, coal-scuttle bonnet, etc. More time lost with that; and, when we did arrive in the arena, the spectators were tired of waiting. The bull stood in the middle, confused and stupid. The tiger was in his cage in a corner; we gave him time to observe his prey, and then we opened the door of his cage.

A shiver ran through the audience (they were all seated in boxes looking down on the area).

A moment more, and the furious animal would spring upon his victim, and his fangs and claws sink deep into its neck, etc., etc. *Vide* books of travels.

One moment succeeded to another, and nothing occurred. The ferocious animal lay quiet in his cage, and showed no sign; so then we poked the ferocious animal. He snarled, but would not venture out. When this had lasted a long time, the spectators began to doubt his ferocity, and to goose the ferocious animal. So I got a red-hot iron and nagged him behind. He gave a yell of dismay, and went into the arena like a shot. He took no notice of the bull. All he thought of was escape from the horrors that surrounded him. Winged by terror, he gave a tremendous spring, and landed his fore paws on the boxes, stuck fast, and glared in at the spectators. They rushed out yelling. He dug his hind claws into the wood-work, and by slow and painful degrees clambered into the boxes. When he got in, the young and active were gone home, and he ran down the stairs among the old people that could not get clear so quick as the rest. He was so frightened at the people that he skulked and hid himself in a cornfield, and the people were so frightened at him that they ran home and locked their street doors. So one coward made many.

They thought the poor wretch had *attacked* them, and the journal next day maintained this view of the transaction, and the town to this day believes it. We netted our striped coward with four shutters, and kicked him into his cage.

The bull went home with "the wench," and to this day his thick skull has never comprehended what the deuce he went to Versailles for.

This was how we competed with Oriental monarchs.

We marched southward, through Orleans, Tours, etc., to Bordeaux, and were pretty well received in all these places except at one small place whose name I forget. Here they hissed her out of the town at sight. It turned out she had been there before and pulverized a brushmaker, a popular man among them.

Soon after Bordeaux she had words with the lions. They, in their infernal conceit, thought themselves more attractive than Djek. It is *vice versa*, and by a long chalk, said Djek

and Co. The parties growled a bit, then parted to meet no more in this world.

From Bordeaux we returned by another route to Paris; for we were only starring it in the interval of our engagement as an actress with Franconi. We started one morning from —— with light hearts, our faces turned toward the gay city, Elliot, Pippin, and I. Elliot and I walked by the side of the elephant, Pippin walking some forty yards in the rear. He never trusted himself nearer to her on a march.

We were plodding along in this order, when, all in a moment, without reason or warning of any sort, she spun round between us on one heel like a thing turning on a pivot, and strode back like lightning at Pippin. He screamed and ran; but, before he could take a dozen steps, she was upon him, and struck him down with her trunk and trampled upon him; she then wheeled round and trudged back as if she had merely stopped to brush off a fly or pick up a stone. After the first moment of stupefaction, both Elliot and I had run after her with all the speed we had; but so rapid was her movement, and so instantaneous the work of death, that we only met her on her return from her victim. I will not shock the reader by describing the state in which we found our poor comrade; but he was crushed to death. He never spoke, and I believe and trust he never felt anything for the few minutes that breath lingered in his body. We kneeled down and raised him, and spoke to him, but he could not hear us. When Djek got her will of one of us, all our hope used to be to see the man die; and so it was with poor dear Pippin; mangled, and life impossible, we kneeled down and prayed to God for his death; and, by Heaven's mercy, I think in about four minutes from the time he got his death-blow his spirit passed away, and our well-beloved comrade and friend was nothing now but a lump of clay on our hands.

We were some miles from any town or village, and did not know what to do, and how to take him to a resting-place. At last we were obliged to tie the body across the proboscis, and cover it as well as we could, and so we made his murderess carry him to the little town of La Palice, — yes, La Palice. Here we stopped, and a sort of inquest was held, and M. Huguet attended and told the old story: said the man had been cruel to her, and she had put up with it as long as she could. Verdict, "Served him right"; and so we lied over our poor friend's murdered body, and buried him with many sighs in the little churchyard of La Palice, and then trudged on, sad and downcast, toward the gay capital.

CHAPTER XI.

I THINK a lesson is to be learned from this sad story. Too much fear is not prudence. Had poor Pippin walked with Elliot and me alongside the elephant, she dared not have attacked him. But through fear he kept forty yards in the rear, and she saw a chance to get him by himself; and, from my knowledge of her, I have little doubt she had meditated this attempt for months before she carried it out. Poor Pippin!

We arrived in Paris to play with Franconi. Now it happened to be inconvenient to Franconi to fulfil his engagement. He accordingly declined us. M. Huguet was angry, — threatened legal proceedings. Franconi answered, "Where is Pippin?" Huguet shut up. Then Franconi followed suit; if hard pressed, he threatened to declare in open court that it was out of humanity alone he declined to fulfil his engagement. This stopped M. Huguet's mouth altogether. He took a place on the Boulevard, and we showed her and her tricks at three prices, and did a rattling business. Before we had been a fortnight in

Paris, old Tom Elliot died at the Hospital Dubois, and I became her vizier at a salary of one hundred francs per week.

Having now the sole responsibility, I watched her as you would a powder-magazine lighted by gas. I let nobody but M. Huguet go near her in my absence. This gentleman continued to keep her sweet on him with lumps of sugar, and to act as her showman when she exhibited publicly.

One day we had a message from the Tuileries, and we got the place extra clean; and the king's children paid her a visit, — a lot of little chaps. I did not know their names, but I suppose it was Prince Joinville, Aumale, and cetera. All I know is that while these little Louis Philippes were coaxing her, and feeding her, and cutting about her, and sliding down her, and I was telling them she was a duck, the perspiration was running down my back one moment and cold shivers the next, and I thanked Heaven devoutly when the young gents went back to their papa and mamma, and no bones broken. The young gentlemen reported her affability and my lies to the king, and he engaged her to perform gratis in the Champs Elysées during the three days' fête. Fifteen hundred francs for this.

But Huguet was penny-wise and pound-foolish to agree, for it took her gloss off. Showed her gratis to half the city.

Among Djek's visitors came one day a pretty young lady, a nursery governess to some nobleman's children, whose name I forget, but he was English. The children were highly amused with Djek, and quite loath to go. The young lady, who had a smattering of English as I had of French, put several questions to me. I answered them more polite than usual on account of her being pretty, and I used a privilege I had and gave her an order for free admission some other day. She came, with only one child, which luckily was one of those deeply meditative ones that occur but rarely, and only bring out a word every half-hour; so mademoiselle and I had a chat, which I found so agreeable that I rather neglected the general public for her. I made it my business to learn where she aired the children, and, one vacant morning, dressed in the top of the fashion, I stood before her in the garden of the Tuileries. She gave a half-start and a blush, and seemed very much struck with astonishment at this rencounter. She was a little less astonished next week when the same thing happened, but still she thought these coincidences remarkable, and said so. In short, I paid my addresses to Mademoiselle ——. She was a charming brunette from Geneva, greatly my superior in education and station. I was perfectly conscious of this, and instantly made this calculation: "All the better for me if I can win her." But the reader knows my character by this time, and must have observed how large a portion of it effrontery forms. I wrote to her every day, sometimes in the French language — no, not in the French language, in French words. She sometimes answered in English words. She was very pretty and very interesting, and I fancied her. When a man is in love he can hardly see difficulties. I pressed her to marry me, and I believed she would consent. When I came to this point the young lady's gayety declined, and when I was painting her pictures of our conjugal happiness, she used to sigh instead of brightening at the picture. At last I pressed her so hard that she consented to write to Geneva and ask her parents' consent to our union. When the letter went I was in towering spirits. I was now in the zenith of my prosperity. The risks I had run with Djek were rewarded by a heavy salary and the post of honor near her, and, now that I was a little weary of roaming the world alone with an elephant, fate had thrown in my way a charming companion who would cheer the weary road.

Dreams.

The old people at Geneva saw my position with another eye. "He is a servant liable to lose his place at any moment by any one of a hundred accidents, and his profession is a discreditable one: why, he is a showman."

They told her all this in language so plain that she would never show me the letter. I was for defying their advice and authority, but she would not hear of it. I was forced to temporize. "In a month's time," said I to myself, "her scruples will melt away." But in less than a fortnight the order came for us to march into Flanders. I communicated this cruel order to my sweetheart. She turned pale, and made no secret of her attachment to me, and of the pain she felt at parting. Every evening before we left Paris I saw her, and implored her to trust herself to me and leave Paris as my wife. She used to smile at my pictures of wedded happiness, and cry the next minute because she dared not give herself and me that happiness; but, with all this, she was firm, and would not fly in her parents' face.

At last came a sad and bitter hour: hat in hand, as the saying is, I made a last desperate endeavor to persuade her to be mine, and not to let this parting take place at all. She was much agitated, but firm; and, the more I said, the firmer she became. So at last I grew frantic and reproached her. I called her a cold-hearted coquette, and we parted in anger and despair.

Away into the wide world again, not as I used to start on these pilgrimages, with a stout heart and iron nerves, but cold, and weary, and worn out before the journey had begun. As we left Paris behind us I had but one feeling, that the best of life was at an end for me. My limbs took me along like machinery, but my heart was a lump of ice inside me, and I would have thanked any man for knocking me on the head and ending the monotonous farce of my existence; ay, gentlefolks, even a poor mechanic can feel like this when the desire of his heart is balked forever.

Trudge! trudge! trudge! for ever and ever.

Tramp! tramp! tramp! for ever and ever.

A man gets faint and weary of it at last, and there comes a time when he pines for a hearth-stone, and a voice he can believe, a part, at least, of what it says, and a Sunday of some sort now and then; and my time was come to long for these things, and for a pretty and honest face about me to stand for the one bit of peace and the one bit of truth in my vagabond charlatan life.

I lost my appetite and sleep, and was very nearly losing heart altogether. My clothes hung about me like bags, I got so thin. It was my infernal occupation that cured me after all. Djek gave me no time even for despair. The moment I became her sole guardian I had sworn on my knees she should never kill another man; judge whether I had to look sharp after her to keep the biped from perjury and the quadruped from murder. I slept with her — rose early — fed her — walked twenty miles with her, or exhibited her all day, sometimes did both, and at night rolled into the straw beside her, too deadly tired to feel all my unhappiness; and so, after a while, time and toil blunted my sense of disappointment, and I trudged, and tramped, and praised Djek's moral qualities in the old routine. Only now and then, when I saw the country lads in France and Belginm going to church dressed in their best with their sweethearts, and I in prison in the stable with my four-legged hussy, waiting perhaps till dark to steal out and march to some fresh town, I used to feel as heavy as lead and as bitter as wormwood, and wish we were all dead together by way of a change.

A man needs a stout heart to go through the world at all, but most of all he needs it for a roving life; don't

you believe any other, no matter who tells you.

With this brief notice of my feelings I pass over two months' travel. All through I spare the reader much, though I dare say he does n't see it.

Sir, the very names of the places I have visited would fill an old-fashioned map of Europe.

Talk of Ulysses and his travels! he never saw the tenth part of what I have gone through.

I have walked with Djek farther than round the world during the eleven years I have trudged beside her; it is only 24,000 miles round the world.

After a year's pilgrimage we found ourselves at Doncheray, near Sedan.

Here we had an incident. Mons. Huguet was showing her to the public with the air of a prince and in his Maréchal of France costume, glittering with his theatrical cross of the Legion of Honor. He was not particular what he put on, so that it shone and looked well. He sent me for something connected with the performance, — a pistol, I think. I had hardly ten steps to go, but during the time I was out of her sight I heard a man cry out and the elephant snort. I ran back hallooing as I came. As I ran in I found the elephant feeling for something in the straw with her foot, and the people rushing out of the doors in dismay. The moment she saw me she affected innocence, but trembled from head to foot. I drew out from the straw a thing you would have taken for a scarecrow or a bundle of rags It was my master, M. Huguet, his glossy hat battered, his glossy coat stained and torn, and his arm broken in two places; a moment more and her foot would have been on him, and his soul crushed out of his body.

The people were surprised when they saw the furious snorting monster creep into a corner to escape a little fellow five feet four, who got to the old weapon, pitchfork, and drove it into every part of her but her head. She hid that in the corner the moment she saw blood in my eye.

We got poor M. Huguet to bed, and a doctor from the hospital to him, and a sorrowful time he had of it; and so, after standing good for twelve years, lump sugar fell to the ground. Pitchfork held good.

At night more than a hundred people came to see whether I was really so hardy as to sleep with this ferocious animal. To show them my sense of her, I lay down between her legs. On this she lifted her fore feet singly, and with the utmost care and delicacy drew them back over my body.

As soon as M. Huguet's arm was set and doing well, he followed us (we had got into France by this time), and came in along with the public to admire us, and, to learn how the elephant stood affected toward him now, he cried out, in his most ingratiating way, — in sugared tones, — "Djek, my boy! Djek!" At this sound Djek raised a roar of the most infernal rage, and Huguet, who knew her real character well enough, though he pretended not to, comprehended that her heart was now set upon his extinction, *malgré* twelve years of lump sugar.

He sent for me, and with many expressions of friendship offered me the invaluable animal for thirty thousand francs. I declined her without thanks. "Then I shall have *the pleasure* of killing her to-morrow," said the Frenchman, "and what will become of your salary, mon pauvre garçon?"

In short, he had me in a fix, and used his power. I bought her of him for 20,000 francs, to be paid by instalments. I gave him the first instalment, a five-franc piece, and walked out of the wine-shop her sole proprietor.

The sense of property is pleasant, even when we have not paid for the article.

That night I formed my plans. There was no time to lose, because I

had only a thousand francs in the world, and she ate a thousand francs a week, or nearly. I determined to try Germany, — a poor country, but one which, being quite inland, could not have become callous to an elephant, perhaps had never seen one. I shall never forget the fine, clear morning I started on my own account. The sun was just rising, the birds were tuning, and all manner of sweet smells came from the fields and the hedges. Djek seemed to step out more majestically than when she was another man's; my heart beat high. Eleven years ago I had started the meanest of her slaves. I had worked slowly, painfully, but steadily up, and now I was actually her lord and master, and half the world before me with the sun shining on it.

The first town I showed her at as mine was Verdun, and the next day I wrote to Mademoiselle —— at Paris to tell her of the change in my fortunes. This was the only letter I had sent, for we parted bad friends. I received a kinder answer than the abrupt tone of my letter deserved. She congratulated me, and thanked me for remembering that whatever good fortune befell me must give her particular pleasure, and in the postscript she told me she was just about to leave Paris and return to her parents in Switzerland.

Djek crossed into Prussia, tramped that country, and penetrated into the heart of Germany. As I had hoped, she descended on this nation with all the charm of novelty, and used to clear the copper * out of a whole village. I remember early in this trip being at a country inn. I saw rustics, male and female, dressed in their Sunday clothes, coming over the hills from every side to one point. I thought there must be a fair or something. I asked the landlord what they were all coming for. He said, "Why, you, to be sure." They never saw such a thing in their lives, and never will again.

In fact, at one or two small places we were stopped by the authorities, who had heard that we carried more specie out of little towns than the circulating medium would bear.

In short, my first *coup* was successful. After six months' Germany, Bavaria, Prussia, etc., I returned to the Rhine at Strasbourg with eight thousand francs. During all this time she never hurt a soul, I watched her so fearfully close. So, being debarred from murder, she tried arson.

At a place in Bavaria her shed was suddenly observed to be in flames, and we saved her with difficulty.

The cause never transpired until now, but I saw directly how it had been done. I had unwarily left my coat in her way. The pockets were found emptied of all their contents, among which was a lucifer-box, fragments of which I found among the straw. She had played with this in her trunk, hammering it backward and forward against her knee, dropping the lighted matches into the straw, when they stung her, and very nearly roasted her own beef, the mischievous, uneasy devil.

My readers will not travel with an elephant, but business of some sort will fall to the lot of some of them soon or late, and, as charlatanry is the very soul of modern business, it may not be amiss to show how the humble artisan worked his elephant.

We never allowed ourselves to drop casually upon any place, like a shower of rain.

A man in bright livery, green and gold, mounted on a showy horse, used to ride into the town or village, and go round to all the inns, making loud inquiries about their means of accommodation for the elephant and her train. Four hours after him, the people being now a little agog, another green and gold man came in on a trained horse, and inquired for No. 1. As soon as he had found him, the two rode together round the town, — No.

* Germany is mostly made of copper. A bucketful of farthings was a common thing for me to have in my carriage.

2 blowing a trumpet and proclaiming the elephant; the nations she had instructed in the wonders of nature; the kings she had amused; her grandeur, her intelligence, and, above all, her dovelike disposition.

This was allowed to ferment for some hours, and, when expectation was at its height, the rest of the cavalcade used to heave in sight, Djek bringing up the rear. Arrived, I used to shut her in out of sight, and send all my men and horses round, parading, trumpeting, and pasting bills, so that at last the people were quite ripe for her, and then we went to work; and thus the humble artisan and his elephant cut a greater dash than lions, and tigers, and mountebanks, and quacks, and drew more money.

Here is one of my programmes: only I must remark that I picked up my French where I picked up the sincerity it embodies, in the circuses, coulisses, and cabarets of French towns, so that I can patter French as fast as you like; but, of course, I know no more about it than a pig, — not to really know it.

Par permission de M. le Maire,
Le grand
ELEPHANT
du Roi de Siam,
Du Cirque Olympique Franconi.
Mlle. Djek,
Eléphant colossal, de onze pieds de hauteur et du poids de neuf mille liv., est le plus grand éléphant qui l'on ait vu en Europe.

M. H. B. Lott, naturaliste, pourvoyeur des ménageries des diverses cours d'Europe, actionnaire du Cirque Olympique et propriétaire de ce magnifique éléphant, qu'il a dressé au point de le présenter au public dans une pièce théatrale qui fut créée pour Madlle. Djek il y a trois ans et demi, et qui a eu un si grand succès, sous le nom de l'Eléphant du Roi de Siam.

Le propriétaire, dans son voyage autour du monde, eut occasion d'acheter cet énorme quadrupède, qui le prit

en affection, et qui, depuis onze ans qu'il le possède, ne s'est jamais dementi, se plaît à écouter son maître et exécute avec punctualité tout ce qu'il lui indique de faire.

Mlle. Djek, qui est dans toute la force de sa taille, a maintenant cent vingt-cinq ans; elle a onze pieds de hauteur — et pèse neuf mille livres.

Sa consommation dans les vingt-quatre heures excède deux cent livres — quarante livres de pain pour son déjeûner; à midi, du son et de l'avoine; le soir, des pommes de terre ou du rizcuit: et la nuit du foin et de la paille.

C'est le même éléphant qui a combattu la lionne de M. Martin. Cette lionne en furie, qu'une imprudence fit sortir de sa cage, s'élance sur M. H. B. Lott qui se trouvait auprès de son éléphant; voyant le danger il se réfugie derrière une des jambes de ce bon animal, qui relève sa trompe pour le protéger.* La lionne allait saisir M. H. B. Lott; l'éléphant la voit, rabat sa trompe, l'enveloppe, l'étouffe, la jette au loin, et l'aurait écrasée, si son maître ne lui eut dit de ne pas continuer.

Elle a ensuite allongé sa trompe, frappé du pied, criant et témoignant la satisfaction, qu'elle éprouvait d'avoir sauvé son ami d'une mort certaine, comme on a pu voir dans les journaux en février 1832.

Dans les cours des séances, on lui fera faire tous ses grands exercices qui sont dignes d'admiration, dont le grand nombre ne permet pas d'en donner l'analyse dans cette affiche, et qu'il faut voir pour l'en faire une idée juste.

Prix d'entrée: Premières
Secondes Les militaires et les enfants, moitié.

I don't think but what my countrymen will understand every word of the above; but, as there are a great

* I am a dull fellow now, as you see. But you must allow I have been a man of imagination.

number of Frenchmen in London who will read this, I think it would look unkind not to translate it into English for their benefit.

By permission of the Worshipful the Mayor,
the great
ELEPHANT
of the King of Siam,
from Franconi's Olympic Circus.
Mademoiselle Djek,
Colossal Elephant, eleven feet high and weighs nine thousand pounds. The largest elephant ever seen in Europe.

Mr. H. B. Lott, naturalist, who supplies the menageries of the various courts of Europe, shareholder in the Olympic Circus, and proprietor of this magnificent elephant, which he has trained to such a height that he will present her to the public in a dramatic piece which was written for her three years and a half ago, and had a great success under the title of the Elephant of the King of Siam.*

The proprietor, in his voyage round the globe, was fortunate enough to purchase this enormous quadruped, which became attached to him, and has been eleven years in his possession, during which time she has never once forgotten herself, and executes with obedient zeal whatever he bids her.

Mlle. Djek has now arrived at her full growth, being one hundred and twenty-five years of age; she is eleven feet high, and weighs nine thousand pounds. Her daily consumption exceeds two hundred pounds. She takes forty pounds of bread for her breakfast, at noon barley and oats, in the evening potatoes or rice cooked, and at night hay and straw.

This is the same elephant that fought with Mr. Martin's lioness. The lioness, whom the carelessness of the attendants allowed to escape from her cage, dashed furiously at Mr. H. B. Lott; fortunately he was near his elephant, and, seeing the danger, took refuge behind one of the legs of that valuable animal. She raised her trunk in her master's defence. The lioness made to seize him; but the elephant lowered her trunk, seized the lioness, choked her, flung her a distance, and would have crushed her to death if Mr. Lott had not commanded her to desist. After that she extended her trunk, stamped with her foot, trumpeting and showing her satisfaction at having saved her friend from certain death, full accounts of which are to be seen in the journals of February, 1832.

In the course of the exhibition she will go through all her exercises, which are wonderful, and so numerous that it is impossible to enumerate them in this bill: they must be seen to form a just idea of them.

Prices: First places Second
Soldiers and children half price.

Djek and I used to make our bow to our audiences in the following fashion. I came on with her, and said, "Otez mon chapeau pour saluer"; then she used to take off my hat, wave it gracefully, and replace it on my head. She then proceeded to pick up twenty five-franc pieces, one after another, and keep them piled in the extremity of her trunk. She also fired pistols, and swept her den with a broom, in a most painstaking and ludicrous way.

But perhaps her best business in a real judge's eye was drinking a bottle of wine. The reader will better estimate this feat if he will fancy himself an elephant, and lay down the book now, and ask himself how he would do it, and read the following afterward.

The bottle (cork drawn) stood before her. She placed the finger and thumb of her proboscis on the mouth,

* My literary gent and me nearly had words over this bit. "Why, it is all nominative case," says he. "Well," says I, "you can't have too much of a good thing. Can you better it?" says I. "Better it!" says he; "why, I could not have come within a mile of it"; and he grinned. So I shut him up — for once.

made a vacuum by suction, and then, suddenly inverting the bottle, she received the contents in her trunk. The difficulty now was to hold the bottle, which she would not have broken for a thousand pounds (my lady thought less of killing ten men than breaking a saucer), and yet not let the liquor run from her flesh-pipe. She rapidly shifted her hold to the centre of the bottle, and worked it by means of the wrinkles in her proboscis to the bend of it. Then she griped it, and at the same time curled round her trunk to a sloping position, and let the wine run down her throat. This done, she resumed the first position of her trunk and worked the bottle back toward her finger, suddenly snapped hold of it by the neck, and handed it gracefully to me.

With this exception, it was not her public tricks that astonished me most. The principle of all these tricks is one. An animal is taught to lay hold of things at command, and to shift them from one place to another. You vary the thing to be laid hold of, but the act is the same. In her drama, which was so effective on the stage, Djek did nothing out of the way. She merely went through certain mechanical acts at a word of command from her keeper, who was unseen or unnoticed; i. e. he was either at the wing in his fustian jacket, or on the stage with her in gimcrack and gold, as one of a lot of slaves or courtiers, or what not. Between ourselves, a single trick I have several times caught her doing on her own account proved more for her intelligence than all these. She used to put her eye to a keyhole. Ay, that she would, and so watch for hours to see what devil's trick she could do with impunity, — she would see me out of the way, and then go to work. Where there was no keyhole I have seen her pick the knot out of a deal board, and squint through the little hole she had thus made.

A dog comes next to an elephant, but he is not up to looking through a keyhole or a crack. He can think of nothing better than snuffing under the door.

At one place, being under a granary, she worked a hole in the ceiling no bigger than a thimble, and sucked down sackfuls of grain before she was found out. Talk of the half-reasoning elephant: she seldom met a man that could match her in reasoning, — to a bad end. Her weak points were her cruelty and cowardice, and by this latter Tom Elliot and I governed her with a rod of iron, vulgarly called a pitchfork. If a mouse pattered about the floor in her stable, Djek used to tremble all over, and whine with terror till the little monster was gone. A ton shaken by an ounce.

I have seen her start back in dismay from a small feather floating in the air. If her heart had been as stout as her will to do mischief was strong, mankind must have risen to put her down.

Almost all you have ever heard about the full-grown elephant's character is a pack of falsities. They are your servants by fear, or they are your masters. Two years ago an elephant killed his keeper at Liverpool or Manchester, I forget which. Out came the "Times": he had pronged him six weeks before. How well I knew the old lie; it seldom varies a syllable. That man died, not because he had pronged the animal, but because he had n't, or not enough.

Spare the pitchfork, spoil the elephant.

There is another animal people misconstrue just as bad, — the hyena.

Terrible fierce animal, the hyena, says Buffon and Co., and the world echoes the chant.

Fierce, are they? You get a score of them together in a yard, and you shall see me walk into the lot with nothing but a switch, and them try to get between the brick and the mortar with the funk, — that is how fierce they are; and they are not only cowardly, but innocent, and affectionate into the bargain, is the fierce hyena of Buffon and Co.; but, indeed, wild animals

are sadly misunderstood; it is pitiable; and those that have the best character deserve it less than those that have the worst.

In one German town I met with something I should like to tell the sporting gents, for I don't think there is many that ever fell in with such a thing. But it is an old saying that what does happen has happened before and may again, so I tell this to put them on their guard, especially in Germany. Well, it was a good town for business, and we stayed several days; but before we had been there many hours my horses turned queer. Restless they were, and uneasy. Sweated of their own accord. Stamped eternally. One, in particular, began to lose flesh. We examined the hay. It seemed particularly good, and the oats not amiss. Called the landlord in, and asked him if he could account for it. He stands looking at them; this one, called Dick, was all in a lather. "Well, I think I know now," said he; "they are bewitched. You see there is an old woman in the next street that bewitches cattle, and she rides on your horses' backs all night, you may take your oath." Then he tells us a lot of stories, whose cow died after giving this old wench a rough word, and how she had been often seen to go across the meadows in the shape of a hare. "She has a spite against me, the old sorceress," says he. "She has been at them: you had better send for the pastor." "Go for the farrier, Jem," says I. So we had in the farrier. He sat on the bin and smoked his pipe in dead silence, looking at them. "They seem a little fidgety," says he, after about half an hour. So I turned *him* out of the stable. And I was in two minds about punching his head, I was. "Send for the veterinary surgeon, No. 1." He came. "They have got some disorder," says he, "that is plain; nostrils are clear, too. Let me see them eat." They took their food pretty well. Then he asked where we came from last. I told him. "Well," said he, cheerfully, "this is a murrain, I think. In this country we do invent a new murrain about every twenty years. We are about due now." He spoke English, this one,—quite a fine gentleman. One of the grooms put in, "I think the water is poisoned." "Any way," says another, "Dick will die if we stay here." So then they both pressed me to leave the town. "You know, governor, we can't afford to lose the horses." Now I was clearing ten pounds a day in the place, and all expenses paid: so I looked blank. So did the veterinary. "I would n't go," says he; "wait a day or two; then the disease will declare itself, and we shall know what we are doing." You see, gents, he did not relish my taking a murrain out of his town; he was a veterinary. "Whatever it is," says he, "you brought it with you." "Well, now," said I, "my opinion is I found it here. Did you notice anything at the last place, Nick?" "No": the grooms both bore me out. "Oh!" says the vet., "you can't go by that: it had not declared itself." Well, if you will believe me (I often laugh when I think of it), it was not two minutes after he said that that it did declare itself. It was Sunday morning, and Nick had got a clean shirt on. Nick was currying the very horse called Dick, when all of a sudden the sleeve of his white shirt looked dirty. "What now?" cries he, and comes to the light. "I do believe it is vermin," says he, "and if it is they are eaten up with it." "Vermin? What vermin can that be?" said I; "have we invented a new vermin, too?" They were no bigger than pins' points,—looked like dust on his shirt. "What do you say, sir,—is it vermin?" "Not a doubt of it," says the vet. "These are poultry-lice, unless I am mistaken. Have you any hens anywhere near?" Both the grooms burst out, "Hens? why, there are full a hundred up in the hay-loft." So that was the murrain. The hens had been tumbling in the hay; the hay came down to the rack all alive with

their vermin; and the vermin were eating the horses. We stopped that supply of hay; and what with currying, and washing with a solut. the vet. gave us, we cured that murrain, — chicken-pox, if any. We had a little scene at going away from this place. Landlord had agreed to charge nothing for the use of stabling, we spent so much in other ways with him. In spite of that, he put it down at the foot of the list. I would not pay. "You must." "I won't." "Then you sha' n't go till you do"; and with that he and his servants closed the great gates. The yard was entered by two great double doors like barn doors, secured outside by a stout beam. So there he had us fast. It got wind, and there was the whole population hooting outside, three thousand strong. Then it was, "Come, don't be a fool."

"Don't you be a fool."

"Stand clear," said I to the man; "we will alter our usual line of march this time; I'll take Djek from the rear to the front." So they all formed behind me and Djek, two carriages, and six horses, all in order. "Now," said I, "landlord, you have had your joke, open the door, and let us part friends; we have been with you a week, you know, and you have had one profit out of us, and another out of the townsfolk we brought to your bar. Open the door."

"Pay me my bill, and I'll open," says he. "If I turned away one traveller from my stable for you I've turned away twenty."

"A bargain is a bargain. Will you open before she knocks your door into toothpicks?"

"Oh! I'll risk my door if you 'll risk your beast. No, I won't open till I am paid."

"Once, will you open?"

"No."

"Twice, will you open? Thrice?"

"No."

"Djek — Go!"

She walked lazily at the door, as if she did not see it. The moment she touched it both doors were in the road; the beam was in half in the road. Most times one thing stands, another goes; here it all went bodily on all sides like paper on a windy day, and the people went fastest of all. There was the yell of a multitude under our noses, then an empty street under our eyes. We marched on calm, majestical, and unruffled, beneath the silent night.

Doors and bolts, indeed, to a lady that had stepped through a brick wall before that day, — an English brick wall.

CHAPTER XII.

From Strasbourg I determined to go into Switzerland; above all, to Geneva. I could not help it. In due course of time and travel I arrived near Geneva, and sent forward my green and gold avant-couriers; but, alas! they returned with the doleful news that elephants were not admitted into that ancient city. The last elephant that had been there had done mischief, and, at the request of its proprietor, Madlle. Garnier, a young lady whose conscience smote her, for she had another elephant that killed one or two people in Venice, was publicly executed in the fortress.*

Fortúnately (as I then thought), I had provided myself with testimonials from the mayor and governors of some score of towns through which we had passed. I produced these, and made friends in the town, particularly with a Dr. Mayo. At last we were admitted. Djek was proved a dove by such overpowering testimony. I had now paid M. Huguet six thousand francs and found myself possessed of five thousand more. Business was very good in Geneva. Djek was very popular. Her intelligence and amiability became a by-word. I had but one bitter disappointment, though.

* They gave this elephant an ounce of prussic acid and an ounce of arsenic; neither of these sedatives producing any effect, they fired a cannon-ball through her neck.

Madlle. —— never came to see us, and I was too sulky and too busy to hunt for her. Besides, I said to myself, "All the world can find me, and if she cared a button for me she would come to light." I tried to turn it off with the old song,

> "Now get ye gone, ye scornful dame;
> If you are proud, I 'll be the same.
> I make no doubt that I shall find
> As pretty a girl unto my mind."

Behold me now at the climax of prosperity, dressed like a gentleman, driving a pair of horses, proprietor of a whole cavalcade and of an elephant, and, after clearing all expenses, making at the rate of full £600 per annum. There was a certain clergyman of the place used to visit us about every day, and bring her cakes and things to eat, till he got quite fond of her, and believed that she returned his affection. I used to beg him not to go so close to her. On this, his answer was, "Why, you say she is harmless as a chicken"; so then I had no more to say. Well, one unlucky day I turned my back for a moment; before I could get back there were the old sounds, a snort of rage, and a cry of terror, and there was the poor minister in her trunk. At sight of me she dropped him, but two of his ribs were broken, and he was quite insensible, and the people rushed out in terror. We raised the clergyman and carried him home, and in half an hour a mob was before the door, and stones as big as your fists thrown in at the windows: this, however, was stopped by the authorities. But the next day my lady was arrested and walked off to the fortress, and there confined. I remonstrated, expostulated, in vain. I had now to feed her and no return from her: ruin stared me in the face. So I went to law with the authorities. Law is slow, and Djek was eating all the time. Ruin looked nearer still. The law ate my green and gold servants and horses, and still Djek remained *in quod*. Then I refused to feed her any longer, and her expenses fell upon the town. Her appetite and their poverty soon brought matters to a climax. They held a sort of municipal tribunal, and tried her for an attempt at homicide. I got counsel to defend her, for I distrusted my own temper and French.

I can't remember half the fine things he said, but there was one piece of common sense I do remember. He said: "The animal, I believe, is unconscious of her great strength, and has committed a fatal error rather than a crime; still, if you think she is liable to make such errors, let her die rather than kill men. But how do you reconcile to your consciences to punish her proprietor, to rob him of his subsistence? *He* has committed no crime, *he* has been guilty of no want of caution. If, therefore, you take upon yourselves to punish the brute, be honest! buy her of the man first, and then assert your sublime office, — destroy an animal that has offended morality. But a city should be above wronging or robbing an individual." When he sat down I thought my homicide was safe, for I knew Geneva could not afford to buy an elephant without it was out of a Noah's ark.

But up gets an orator on the other side and attacked me; accused me of false representations, of calling a demon a duck. "We have certain information from France that this elephant has been always wounding and killing men up and down Europe these twenty years. Mons. Lott knew this by universal report, and by being an eye-witness of more than one man's destruction." Here there was a sensation, I can tell you. "He has, therefore, forfeited all claims to consideration." Then he thundered out: "Let no man claim to be wiser than Holy Writ; there we are told that a lie is a crime of the very deepest dye, and here we see how for years falsehood has been murder." Then I mind he took just the opposite line to my defender. Says he: "If I hesitate for a moment, it is not for the man's sake, but for the brute's; but I do not

hesitate. I could wish so majestic a creature might be spared for our instruction," says he, "that so wonderful a specimen of the Creator's skill might still walk the earth; but reason, and justice, and humanity say 'No.' There is an animal far smaller, yet ten times more important, for he has a soul; and this, the king of all the animals, is not safe while she lives; therefore she ought to die. Weaker far than her in his individual strength, he is a thousand times stronger by combination and science, — therefore she will die."

When this infernal chatterbox shut up, my heart sunk into my shoes. He was a prig, but an eloquent one, and he walked into Djek and me till we were not worth half an hour's purchase.

For all that, the council did not come to a decision on the spot, and I believe that if Djek had but been content to kill the laity as heretofore, we should have scraped through with a fine; but the fool must go and tear black cloth, and dig her own grave.

Two days after the trial, out came the sentence, — Death!

With that modesty and good feeling which belongs to most foreign governments, they directed me to execute their sentence.

My answer came in English. "I 'll see you d—d, and double d—d first, and then I won't."

Meantime Huguet was persecuting poor heart-sick me for the remainder of her purchase-money, and, what with the delay, the expenses, and the anxiety, I was so down and so at the end of my wits and my patience, that her sentence fell on me like a blow on a chap that is benumbed, — produced less effect upon me at the time than it does when I think of it now.

Well, — curse them! — one fine morning they ran a cannon up to the gate, loaded it and bade me call the elephant, and bring her into a favorable position for being shot. I refused point-blank in English as before. They threatened me for my contumacy. I answered they might shoot me if they liked, but I would not be the one to destroy my own livelihood.

So they had to watch their opportunity.

It was not long of coming.

She began to walk about, and presently the poor fool marched right up to the cannon's mouth, and squinted down it. Then she turned, and at last she crossed right before it. The gunner took the opportunity, applied his linstock, and fired. There was a great tongue of flame, and a cloud of smoke, and through the smoke something as big as a house was seen to go down; the very earth trembled at the shock.

The smoke cleared in a moment, and there lay Djek. She never moved. The round shot went clean through her body, and struck the opposite wall with great force. It was wonderful and sad to see so huge a creature robbed of her days in a moment by a spark. There she lay, — poor Djek.

In one moment I forgot all her faults. She was an old companion of mine in many a wet day and dreary night. She was reputation to me, and a clear six hundred a year; and then she was so clever! We shall never see her like again; and there she lay. I mourned over her, right or wrong, and have never been the same man since that shot was fired.

The butchery done, I was informed by the municipal authorities that the carcass was considered, upon the whole, to be my property. The next moment I had two hundred applications for elephant steaks from the pinch-gut natives, who, I believe, knew gravy by tradition and romances that had come all the way from Paris. Knives and scales went to work, and, with the tears running down my cheeks, I sold her beef at four sous per pound for about £40 sterling.

This done, all my occupation was gone. Geneva was no place for me, and as the worthy Huguet, whose life I had saved, threatened to arrest me, I determined to go back to England

and handicraft. Two days after Djck's death I was hanging sorrowfully over the bridge, when some one drew near to me and said, in a low voice, Mons. Lott. I had no need to look up. I knew the voice; it was my lost sweetheart. She spoke very kindly, blushed, and welcomed me to her native country. She did more; she told me she lived five miles from Geneva, and invited me to visit her mother. She took occasion to let me know that her father was dead: "My mother refuses me nothing," she added, with another blush. This was all like a dream to me. The next day I visited her and her mother, and was cordially received; in short, it was made clear to me that my misfortune had endeared me to this gem of a girl instead of repelling her. An uncle, too, had died, and left her three hundred pounds, and this made her bolder still; and she did not conceal her regard for me. She told me she had seen me once in Geneva driving two showy horses in a carriage, and looking like a nobleman, and so had hesitated to claim the acquaintance; but hearing the elephant's execution, and guessing that I could no longer be on the high-road to fortune, she had obeyed her heart, and been the first to remind me I had once esteemed her.

In short, a Pearl.

I made her a very bad return for so much goodness. I went and married her. We then compounded with Huguet for three thousand francs, and sailed for England to begin the world again.

The moment I got to London, I made for the Seven Dials to see my friend Paley.

On the way I met a mutual acquaintance; told him where I was going, — red-hot.

He shook his head and said nothing.

A chill came over me. If you had stuck a knife in me I should n't have bled. I gasped out some sort of inquiry.

"Why, you know he was not a young man," says he; and he looked down.

That was enough for such an unlucky one as me. I began to cry directly. "Don't ye take on," says he. "Old man died happy. Come home with me; my wife will tell you more about it than I can."

I was loath to go; but he persuaded me. His wife told me the old gentleman spoke of me to the last, and had my letters read out, and boasted of my success.

"Did n't I tell you he would rise?" he used to say; and then, it seems, he made much of some little presents I had sent him from Paris, and them such trifles compared with what I owed him: "Does n't forget old friends, now he is at the top of the tree"; and then burst out praising me, by all accounts.

So, then, it was a little bit of comfort to think he had died while I was prosperous, and that my disappointment had never reached his warm and feeling heart.

A workman has little time to grieve outwardly; he must dry his eyes quickly, let his heart be ever so sad, or he 'll look queer when Saturday night comes. You can't make a workmanlike joint with the tear in your eye; one half the joiners can't do it with their glasses on. And I was a workman once more; I had to end as I began.

I returned to the violin trade, and, by a very keen attention to its mysteries, I made progress, and, having a foreign connection, I imported and sold to English dealers, as well as made, varnished, and doctored violins. But soon the trade, through foreign competition, declined to a desperate state. I did not despair, but, to eke out, I set my wife up in a china and curiosity shop in Wardour Street, and worked at my own craft in the back parlor. I had no sooner done this than the writers all made it their business to sneer at Wardour Street, and now nobody dares buy in that street; so, since I began this tale, we have

closed the shop, — it only wasted their time, — they are much better out walking, and getting fresh air, at least, for their trouble. I attend sales, and never lose a chance of turning a penny; at home I make, and mend, and doctor fiddles; I carve wood; I clean pictures and gild frames; I cut out fruit and flowers in leather; I teach ladies and gentlemen to gild at so much a lesson; and by these and a score more of little petty arts I just keep the pot boiling.

I am, as I have been all my life, sober, watchful, enterprising, energetic, and unlucky.

In early life I played for a great stake, — affluence.

I think I may say I displayed in the service of Djek some of those qualities by which, unless books are false, men have won campaigns and battles, and reaped fortunes and reputations: result in my case, a cannon-shot fired in a dirty little village, calling itself a city, in a country that Yorkshire could eat up and spit out again, after all the great kingdoms and repubs. had admired her and forgiven her her one defect — a tongue of fire — a puff of smoke — and all the perils, labor, courage, and perseverance of eleven years blown away like dust to the four winds of Heaven.

I am now playing for a smaller stake; but I am now, as usual, playing my very best. I am bending all my experience of work and trade, all my sobriety, activity, energy, and care, all my cunning of eye and hand, to one end, — not to die in the workhouse.

Ladies and gentlemen, the workman has said his say, and I hope the company have been amused.

THE END.

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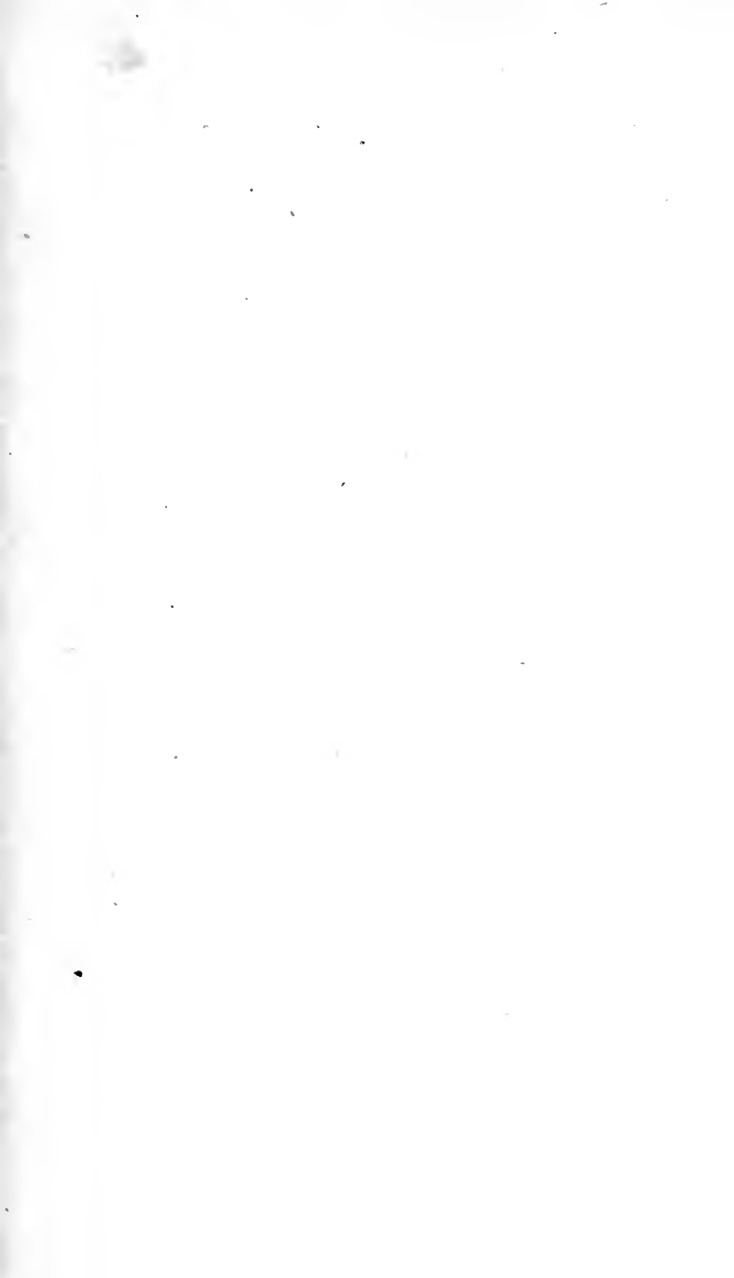

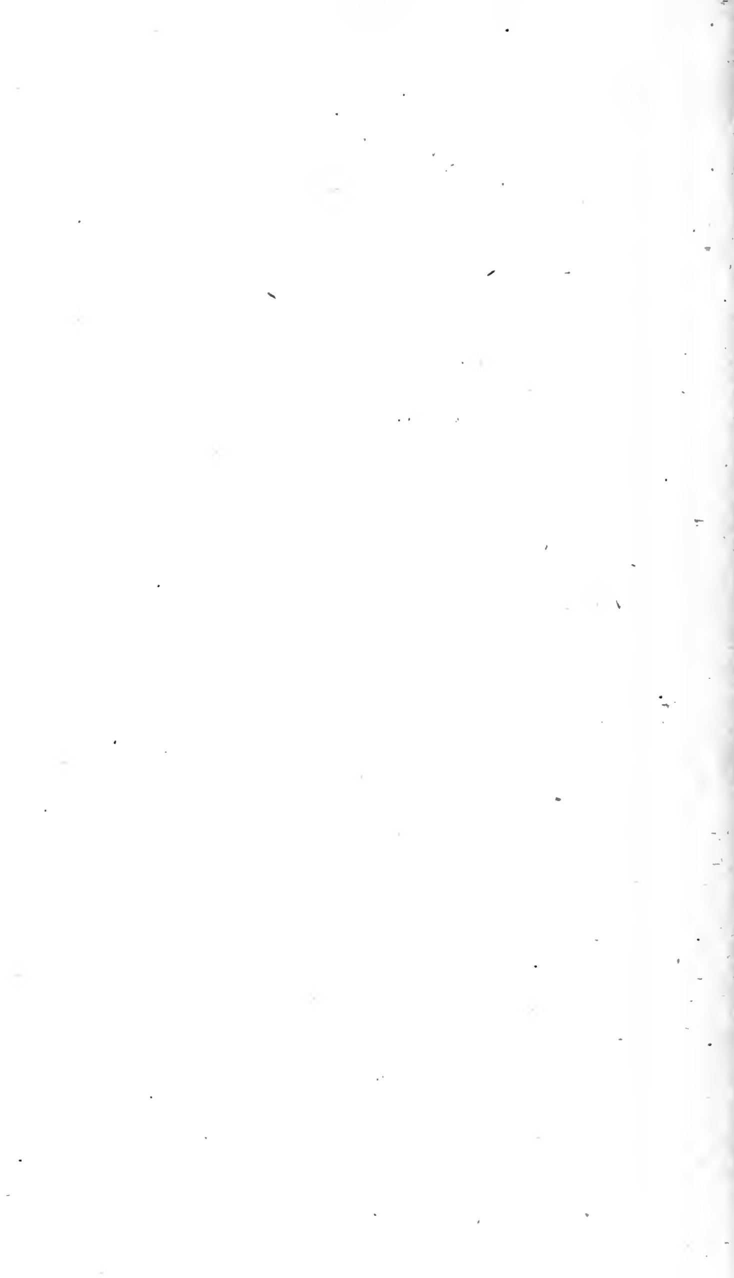

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